Memorials of David Thomas

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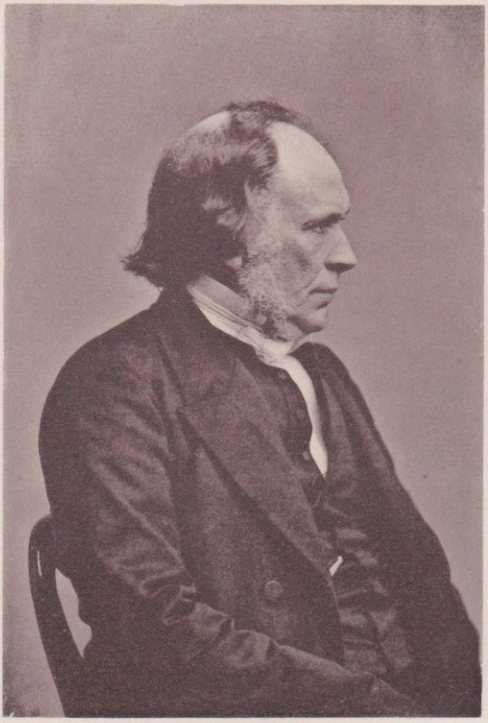

Yours affectionately
David Thomas

MEMORIALS

OF THE REV.

DAVID THOMAS, B.A.,

OF BRISTOL.

EDITED BY HIS SON

H. ARNOLD THOMAS, M.A.

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TO

THE CONGREGATION

ASSEMBLING AT HIGHBURY CHAPEL, BRISTOL,

These Memorials

OF THEIR LATE MINISTER,

WHO SERVED THEM IN THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

FOR THIRTY-ONE YEARS,

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

This volume will explain itself. It is hoped that it will not be unacceptable to those who knew and loved Mr. Thomas, and for whom, chiefly, it has been compiled.

His life was very quiet and uneventful, and he seldom wrote letters, and never, except once or twice, when he was travelling, kept a journal. A lengthened biography, therefore, would have been out of the question, even had it been desirable.

With regard to the sermons, it should be said that they were never intended to be read, still less to be printed. The three which stand first were copied out at the time of their delivery, by one of Mr. Thomas's daughters, with his occasional help. The others were taken down in shorthand, by a member of his congregation. All are given, as nearly as possible, as they were delivered, and it is believed that they will be valued by those, whose memory and imagination can supply what cannot be reproduced on the printed page.

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CHAPTER I.

"The child is father of the man,
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

DAVID THOMAS, the youngest child of his parents, was born at Merthyr Tydvil, on the 16th of August, in the year 1811. His father had been originally a farmer, but when the iron trade of Merthyr was developed, and new branches of industry were thereby created, he gave up his farm, and engaged in hauling contracts in connection with the Cyfartha Works. He is reported to have been a man of exceptional piety, and was remembered especially for the power and fervency of his prayers. He died when David was an infant, leaving a widow and three elder children: Samuel, who survives, and is a colliery proprietor at Aberdare, John, who died of a decline in early manhood; and Ruth, who also survives.

By the death of his father, David was left in his early childhood to the exclusive care and guardianship of his mother; and very faithful she was to the charge that was thus laid upon her, and very salutary and abiding was the influence she exerted upon her little son, as he himself, in after years, was ever ready with thankfulness to acknowledge. She was a Calvinistic Methodist, and was strongly imbued with religious sentiment, and sincerely anxious for the spiritual well-being of her children. One of Mr. Thomas's earliest recollections was that of being taken by her to the prayer-meetings in which she delighted, and which she would sometimes attend, at one chapel or another, three or four evenings in the week.

At these meetings her little companion was no unwilling attendant. He seems to have entered very early into the spirit of them, and soon learnt to share in his mother's sentiments and enjoyments. This was owing partly, no doubt, to the natural strength of the religious element within him; but it may also be attributed, in part, to the fact that among the Calvinistic Methodists it is customary to regard the children who have been baptized, and whose parents are esteemed Chris-

tians, as themselves connected with the Church, and to notice them, and consult their interests and requirements, to an extent which is, probably, unusual in any other religious body. This admirable custom must necessarily give to the children of the Church a charm and significance in its services which they cannot possess where it is not observed. David was admitted a full member of the Church to which his mother belonged when he was fifteen years of age.

At this time religious meetings were his greatest delight, and in after life, as they returned to his memory, they were invested with all the air and charm of a romance. The Welsh hills, he used to say, reverberated with the voices of the old Welsh preachers, as he had heard them in his boyhood.

He was sent to a school kept by a Mr. Williams, who was a remarkable man in his way. He was the son of Edward Williams, known better in South Wales as Iolo Morganwg, a poet, antiquarian, and naturalist of some repute.

Taliesin Williams, the schoolmaster, was a Unitarian, but, strange to say, a strong State Churchman. He, like his father, was a poet, and

an enthusiast for the old Welsh literature. He appears to have been well qualified for the work of teaching, to which he devoted himself.

In connection with David's school life there is little of general interest to be recorded. As a boy he was full of life and spirits, delighting in country rambles, in nut-gathering and bathing, and other sports which are dear to boyhood. At the same time he appears to have been careful not to transgress any of the strict rules of conduct to which he had been trained. One of his schoolfellows remembers how wistfully he stood, on one occasion, watching the other boys as they played at marbles, a game which had much fascination for him, but in which, being perhaps at that time a Church member, or about to become such, he did not feel at liberty to indulge; for with those among whom he was brought up the number of amusements that were reckoned lawful was very small indeed, and marble-playing was not included in it.

Among the pupils at Mr. Williams's in his time were Mr. Petherick, the well-known African explorer, and Sir W. James, now Lord Justice of the Court of Appeal.

He left school when he was sixteen, and after

trying unsuccessfully to find suitable employment in Merthyr, determined to seek his fortunes in London. Here he soon found a place as clerk in Barclay's Bank, in Lombard-street, where he remained about three years. He appears to have been much liked by his employers and fellow-clerks, among whom he was known as "little Thomas," a description which may have been appropriate then, but which will seem strange to those who were familiar with the tall figure and broad shoulders which were associated with his name in later years. He always looked back with interest upon the time which he spent at the bank, and there is no doubt that the knowledge of business which he acquired while he was connected with it was a very useful element in the education by which he was fitted for the manifold duties which he was afterwards called upon to fulfil as a Christian minister. He never lost what he learnt as a banker's clerk, and those who had to do with him in business relations were often surprised to find how well he understood matters with reference to which ministers of religion are frequently ill-informed, and how keen and intelligent he was in his judgment upon them. His Lombard-street education was hardly less

valuable than that which he received at college, and which had a more direct relation to his future work.

It may be worth noting also that while he was engaged at the bank he had the opportunity of making himself acquainted with the geography of London, and that he availed himself of the opportunity. There are few who know the great city as he did. He was at home in every part of it. He knew the byeways and short cuts as well as the leading thoroughfares, and many will remember how he would conduct them sometimes through mysterious places, the existence of which was unknown to them, but which he had discovered in his youth and had not forgotten, to the point they were anxious to gain. He had, no doubt, to start with, a strong geographical instinct. "I never lost myself," he said once, "except in a sermon," and those who ever travelled with him will readily believe that he was right, and some, perhaps, will be even inclined to doubt the exception which he made.

While he was at the bank he met with his first great sorrow, in the death of his brother John, for whom he had great affection and admiration, and

who seems to have been a young man of singular promise. He died of consumption, a disease of which David ever afterwards had the greatest horror, and by which, fancying that his constitution was similar to his brother's, and having occasionally some symptoms of an unfavourable kind, he feared that he would himself be attacked.

It was never his intention to give himself to business. From the first his desire was towards the ministry. As a child there had seemed to him to be nothing so good or so enviable as the work of the minister, and he carried into manhood the child's feeling concerning it. Accordingly, after some time had been spent in business engagements, he began to consider how he should carry out the purpose which he had formed for his life.

Mr. Thomas Wilson was well known at that time for the interest which he took in young ministers, and the aid and encouragement which he gave to those who were anxious to enter the ministry, and who possessed, as he thought, the requisite qualifications. To him Mr. Thomas resolved to apply. An interview was sought and granted, and the result of it was satisfactory. Mr. Wilson saw that in the banker's clerk there was the promise of a

good preacher, and he encouraged him to persevere in his purpose, and advised him to spend some months with the Rev. Walter Scott, of Rowell, in Northamptonshire, with the idea of entering Highbury College at the termination of that period if it should then seem desirable that he should do so.

When his time of probation at Rowell was concluded, Mr. Thomas came up to London for the examination which he was required to pass before he could be admitted to the College. It was on this occasion that he first met Mr. Henry Richard, who became his most intimate college friend, and for whom, to the end of his life, he cherished feelings of the greatest affection and regard. Mr. Richard gives the following account of his first introduction to his friend, and of their intimacy and common experiences while they were students together at Highbury:—

"I went to lodge at the Welsh Chapel-House, and when I explained to some of the inmates the object of my journey to the metropolis, I was told that there was a young man of the name of David Thomas, from Merthyr, in the house, who was about to enter Highbury College. I was soon introduced to him. He was very tall and very thin, with high shoulders and an abund-

ance of light brown hair, in a rather dishevelled condition. He knew my father, who had probably been entertained at his good mother's house at Merthyr during some of his visits to Glamorganshire, for my father's ministerial labours extended over every part of the Principality. He had, at least, heard him preach frequently, and cherished for him that reverence almost amounting to worship which the Welsh, and especially the Welsh Methodists, felt towards their great preachers. He greeted me, therefore, with the greatest cordiality, and at once offered to introduce me to Thomas Wilson. I will not here tell the story of my own admission to Highbury, though it is amusing enough. All that I expected was, to be sent for a probationary period to Rowell, as he had been; but somehow my very scanty scholarship passed muster, and after having undergone the terrible ordeal of preaching before the committee, and the subsequent examination, I was told I might at once enter the College. This was as great a satisfaction to Mr. Thomas as to myself, for, with the blessed trustfulness of youth, we had already struck up an ardent friendship during the few days we had spent together in London. From that time we became inseparable, doing our lessons and taking our walks together, and being seldom seen apart. I soon found that Mr. Thomas was possessed of a singularly keen, penetrating, logical intellect. This was, indeed, the special characteristic of his mental constitution which struck me at that time. I am distinctly conscious that one of the advantages I derived from my early intercourse with him was this—that it compelled me to think, and to express my thoughts, with more accuracy and precision than I had been accustomed to. With the boldness of

youth, we used to discuss all manner of questions with freedom and vehemence; but I was not long in discovering that loose, slovenly talk, strong assertions, and fallacies disguised by metaphor, had no chance of passing current with him. He pierced through and shattered them with pitiless severity, so that if I hoped at all to hold my own in these intellectual tournaments, it was necessary to keep vigilantly on my guard, and avoid all dialectic shams.

"I am afraid that neither he nor I were very diligent students. Indeed, the system of education then in vogue at Highbury supplied little spur to scholarship or intellectual proficiency of any kind. There were no degrees to be taken, no rewards or honours to provoke emulation or stimulate ambition. The influence of Thomas Wilson, a most excellent, but not a broad-minded man, pervaded the whole College, and his one object was to make popular preachers. It mattered little to him what place a man held in class, or what attainments he made or failed to make in classics, mathematics, or logic. If he passed as an acceptable preacher, that sufficed to condone all other shortcomings. This led to a good deal of petty intrigue and unworthy adulation of Mr. Wilson, which were distasteful to Mr. Thomas. Then, as regarded preaching, both he and I were exposed to the disadvantage—to me more serious than to him, for he had already lived between three and four years in England—of having to conduct public exercises in what was really to us a foreign language, and in a style wholly different from that to which we had been inured from our childhood. And thus it happened, that though he and I had been brought up in the very atmosphere of preaching, we

failed to enter with any zest or spirit into the homiletic rivalry which was at that time the principal impulse to exertion at Highbury.

"Then Mr. Thomas had a certain nervous restlessness, which continued with him more or less through life, and which rendered it irksome to him to remain long still; so, after two or three hours of application, he used to burst into my study, and propose a long ramble to Highgate or Hampstead, or still more frequently to the city and its environs, for which, during his residence there of three years, he had contracted a great liking. There we sometimes wandered into strange places, and witnessed very strange scenes, some of which I should like at some future time to describe. But all this led to a rather perfunctory discharge of our students' duties, and a neglect of college hours, which vexed the righteous soul of Dr. Halley not a little. I think Mr. Thomas and I were often late on Sunday evenings. According to the rules of the college we were expected to be in by nine o'clock, which was the time for prayers; but the return of all absentees by ten was *de rigueur*. At that hour the gates were locked, and admission could only be obtained by ringing the bell and summoning the janitor, whose duty it was to report the name of the belated student to the resident tutor. But service at the Welsh chapel often included two sermons, and was followed by the 'Society,' or Church meeting, which lasted a considerable time. The distance from Jewin-crescent to Highbury was certainly a full hour's sharp walking. Omnibuses had only just come in, and they did not run to Highbury, and only at rare intervals to the 'Angel,' Islington. Cabs, I think, had not been then introduced,

and our pocket-money was far too scanty to admit of our indulging the luxury of the lumbering and costly hackney-coaches. We were obliged, therefore, to foot it, and terribly hard work sometimes was that walking against time. The very last occasion on which I met my friend, he reminded me with great glee of those pedestrian feats, humorously exulting over the straits to which he used to put me by his greater powers of locomotion. With his tall, lithe figure, and long legs, he could, and did, take prodigious strides, while I, with my shorter steps, 'like panting Time toiled after him in vain.' As we passed up through Islington we peered eagerly into the chemists' shops, to scan the clocks, and calculate whether we could reach the gates before the fateful college bell had tolled the hour of ten, and so escape an interview with Dr. Halley, 'the frowning terrors of whose brow' loomed menacingly before us in the distance.

"I think Mr. Thomas shone chiefly in the logic and rhetoric class, which was under the care of Mr. Henry Rogers. Mr. Rogers, who had a quick eye and generous sympathy for any sign of unusual promise among his pupils, spoke in warm terms of commendation of some of Mr. Thomas's essays, which were indeed received with general applause by the class. This seemed to stir, for the first, and I believe for the last time, some promptings of literary ambition in his heart. There was in those days an *Imperial Magazine*, a periodical of some pretensions, which has, however, for many years disappeared from the literary horizon. Mr. Thomas sent one of his essays to the editor, and it was accepted and inserted. This led, I think, to some correspondence between them as to future contributions,

which, however, had no result, so that this essay—on 'Friendship,' if I remember aright—remains, so far as I know, his solitary contribution to the periodical literature of his age.

"There was another exercise also in which Mr. Thomas excelled. It was the custom of the college for the students to read sermons in turn, which afterwards had to run the gauntlet of criticism, as to doctrine, plan, composition, and delivery, from all the members of the class and the presiding tutor, who on those occasions was Dr. Henderson. I have no distinct recollection of the character of his sermons, except that they were esteemed by us all as of superior order. There were, however, two things that used to strike me—that they were marked, first, by singular felicities of diction, which proved, that though a Welshman, he had studied with care the idiomatic forms of the English language; and secondly, an extremely rapid delivery. Indeed, this latter peculiarity was the subject of constant criticism in the class, especially from our worthy theological tutor, who though a man of profound learning, especially in the Oriental languages, was, like Moses, rather 'slow of speech, and of a slow tongue,' and did not at all sympathise with the rapid and vehement utterance of my young fellow-countryman.

"The London Dissenting pulpits were at that time occupied by men of great and varied powers—John and George Clayton, Dr. Joseph Fletcher, Dr. Bennett, Dr. Leifchild, Dr. Vaughan, Dr. Reed, Mr. Burnet, Mr. Blackburn, and others, all of whom have passed away. Mr. Binney had not long come up from the Isle of Wight to the Weigh-House Chapel, and was considerably fluttering some of the old Nonconformist city

magnates by a style of preaching which appeared to them unwonted and uncanny, if not of doubtful orthodoxy. All these, and especially the last, we heard occasionally. Henry Melville was in the palmiest days of his popularity, and every now and then we used to walk from Highbury and Camberwell to listen to his powerful and passionate oratory. But, as a rule, David Thomas and I, for the first year or two of our College life, before preaching engagements began to break in on our Sundays, used to repair to the Welsh Chapel more frequently than to any other, for to us the ordinary English ministrations seemed cold and formal, compared with the perfervid oratory of our countrymen. In those days, too, the pulpit at Jewin Crescent was supplied by the leading preachers of the Principality—John Elias, Ebenezer Richard (my father), Henry Rees, and others, who I thought then, and think still, were unrivalled masters of sacred eloquence. I, at least, may be pardoned for believing that the rare pulpit power which Mr. Thomas developed at a later period of his life owed something to the influence of those prophet-like utterances with which he had been familiar in early life. A few years ago he wrote to me: 'I have been looking over the Memoirs of your dear father, and they have stirred up memories which have affected me strangely.'" *

* Reprinted from *The Congregationalist*, by kind permission of the Editor.

CHAPTER II.

"I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore; but He hath not given me over unto death."

MR. THOMAS remained for two years at Highbury College. At the end of that period, having gained one of Dr. Williams's scholarships, and being anxious for further educational advantages, he proceeded to the University of Glasgow. His companion in the long journey was an old schoolfellow and attached friend, Mr. Enoch Williams, who afterwards became a Baptist minister, and was held in the highest esteem as a preacher. The two friends lodged together, and were happy enough, though their means were but slender. "My travelling expenses," says Mr. Thomas, writing to his brother soon after his arrival at Glasgow, "amounted to £7 10s., a sum of money not to be sneezed at in my circum-

stances. The recollection of having spent so much is very painful, but it is of little use to allow what is inevitable to inflict misery upon us. After paying Professors' fees, janitor's fees, library fees, and matriculation fees, and purchasing a few books and a college gown—one of the most beggarly scarlet rags your imagination can picture—I have left me for the support of my existence the sum of £5, which, by the application of the severest economy, will suffice till about the middle of January (two months)."

In the same letter he gives his impressions of Glasgow, and describes his work at the College. "I attend two classes, the Senior Greek, and Logic, each of which consists of about 150 students. In the latter we have the son of the Duke of Moncrieff, who, if I may judge from an essay I have heard him read, is a very clever youth. We are likely to have a fierce competition for distinction in the Logic department. If my health continues I have no doubt that, by dint of severe application, the course of study I am likely to pursue in this place, will be of incalculable benefit."

The result of the competition in the Logic class

of which he speaks was, that the prize, which was awarded in accordance with the vote of the students, fell to himself. He won a prize also for Moral Philosophy. He attended the ministry of Dr. Wardlaw, whose church he describes as the finest in the town. Dr. Unwin, now of Homerton College, and Mr. Williams, were his principal University friends.

In his first summer vacation, Mr. Thomas preached for six weeks in the Gallow Gate chapel, at Leicester, where he appears to have made a considerable impression. There are some living now who remember his services with interest and gratitude. The people were very kind to him—almost too kind, apparently. "The hospitality of the frequenters of the chapel," he writes, "is rather distressing. I have no objection to dining out occasionally, but I have no notion of constant feasting. . . . You will not think I am deficient in means of diversion when I tell you that we have here draughts, chess, and a bagatelle board" (this was in the house of the deacon with whom he was living); "and I hope my dear mother will not think us vastly convivial when I confess that father, and mother, daughters, and the young minister are

occasionally occupied with these amusements." He was invited to settle at Leicester, but he was anxious to return to Glasgow and complete his college course, and the invitation was declined, to the disappointment of the congregation, and not, perhaps, without some regret to himself. His recollections of his stay in the town were pleasant, and he always spoke of it with affection and interest.

At the close of the next session at Glasgow he took his Bachelor's degree, and finally left the University. It was his intention to return for another session and take the M.A. degree; but during the vacation he was urgently pressed to become the minister of Zion Chapel, Bristol, to which church he had been recommended by his kind and faithful friend Mr. Wilson, and after some hesitation he decided to abandon the idea of further academic work, and begin the great business of life. He commenced his ministry at Zion Chapel on the second Sunday in January, 1836.

He was married in the following July to Miss Charlotte Saunders, daughter of a Plymouth solicitor, and sister to the Sarah Saunders whose name is known as the correspondent of John Foster,

whose letters to her during her last illness have been published. The union was not to be of long duration. Mrs. Thomas had never been strong; and she died of consumption, to the great grief of her husband, within a year of her marriage. After her death, he went to live with her uncle, Mr. Joseph Cottle, misnamed Amos in Byron's satirical poem—a genial, kindly man, favourably known as the publisher, as well as the friend and helper, of Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. He remained under his roof for two years, and thus had frequent opportunities of association with men of genius and literary attainment.

At this time, also, he had the great good fortune to make the friendship of John Foster—a friendship which, apart from the pleasures connected with it, was fruitful in good influences upon his intellectual character and habits. Mr. Thomas always remembered with thankfulness his intercourse with Mr. Foster, and regarded him with veneration as the religious teacher from whom he had received the largest amount of benefit. "I can't read the Fathers," he exclaimed once, "they are too prolix. I prefer Father Foster;" and undoubtedly "Father Foster" was more to him, as a

guide in moral and spiritual matters, than any other. He named his eldest son after him, and maintained his love and loyalty to the end of his life, as an indication of which it may be noted that, latterly, it was his habit to give a copy of the celebrated Essays to all the young men in whom he was especially interested.

Nor was the esteem all on one side; the fact that Mr. Foster admitted so young a man to his intimate friendship is an evidence of the regard and affection he must have felt for him; and in a letter written to Mr. Cottle when Mr. Thomas's health was failing, he gives expression to his sentiments: "As Mr. Thomas will, at least for a while, remain in our neighbourhood, there will be opportunities of seeing him. How deeply to be regretted is the disablement of such a mind for public service by the infirmity of its frail bodily vehicle. We should most gladly hear of any signs encouraging a hope that, even after a very protracted interval, it might please the All-wise Disposer to grant recovered strength for His service. Whether it shall be so or not, I trust our friend will experience the efficacy and the felicity of his faith inspiring a calm resignation to the will of Him who wills all

things for the welfare of His servants." Mr. Thomas was often to be found in the disorderly rooms of his friend at Stapleton, and once Mr. Foster came to stay with him in his own house.

He continued his ministry at Zion Chapel for six years, and was happy and successful in his work, gathering round him in a short time a circle of warm and appreciative friends. He soon became a power in Bristol, through the force and originality of his preaching, and attracted hearers from distant parts of the city, many of whom were influenced for life by the sermons which they heard. Mr. Crabb Robinson, a portion of whose voluminous diary was published some years ago, came twice to hear him at Bedminster. The first time he went into the vestry, before the service, to speak to him. Mr. Thomas, nervous and sensitive then, as he was to the end, begged him to go away, assuring him that he could not possibly preach if he were present. Mr. Robinson yielded; but he came again, and heard what he describes in his "Reminiscences" as an eloquent sermon, on the text "God reigneth," in which the "union of thought and feeling was such as to gratify persons of intelligence and religious zeal." He adds that

the "interesting young divine" breakfasted with him once or twice in London, and remarks that the Cottles, with whom he was acquainted, thought him next to Robert Hall.*

Young men especially seem to have been brought under Mr. Thomas's power at this time, as, indeed, in later times. The following extract from a letter written about a year ago, by one of these, will furnish an illustration of this power: "The thought of your early ministerial work carries back my memory to the old days of Zion Chapel, when it used to be a Sunday evening luxury to some of us to go out to hear occasionally your father's sermons, in days when his ministry was not very long begun. I remember how they used to affect my mind when I was just emerging from school-boy days; how they created within me a sort of undefined but vivid imagery, like a revelation of the unseen and celestial in contrast with the very earthly landscape which this world is sure to present; how this imagery became a kind of latent, ghostly presence, carried about in my memory, and ready to be realised when any special circum-

* These references are kindly supplied by Dr. Sadler, the editor of Mr. Robinson's Diary.

stances brought unusual duties or unusual temptations forward, so that it was, in a manner, a Socratic δαίμων—a warning good angel to me; and how, too, the effect of those sermons was to stir up in my own mind and imagination whatever there was to be stirred, and so to create another ripple on the water external to that which was properly its own. All this is vague, and perhaps partly incorrect, but it is the reflection of a real object in times past which had a very material influence on my own life even in these early days."

The manner of his preaching in those days was unlike that of later times. His utterance was very rapid, and there was more energy of action; the sermons themselves also were, as a rule, much shorter.

In the year 1839, Mr. Thomas was invited to become the tutor at Brecon College, and in the autumn of the same year he was asked to take charge of a Church at Oxford. Both invitations were declined. In December, 1839, he was married to Miss Eliza Leonard, a daughter of Mr. Robert Leonard, of Bristol, and granddaughter of Mr. John Hare, the founder and principal supporter of Zion Chapel. In her he

found a true and devoted wife, and one who has ever been, as he described her soon after his marriage, "the image of all that is meek and gentle." How much he owed to her, and her sympathy and loving care, is known fully only to those who shared in his home life. Perhaps it was fully known only to himself.

Their first child was born in March, 1841. In the following year Mr. Thomas's health began decidedly to give way. It seemed as if the thing he greatly feared were about to come upon him; he was much troubled with a cough, and there were symptoms which led him to believe that the cruel disease which had carried away his brother and his wife was about to attack him also. Perhaps, with his nervous disposition, he magnified a little these symptoms; but they did exist, and they filled his friends with anxiety, which was not relieved by the opinions of some physicians who were consulted. In the summer of 1842 he resigned his charge, and resolved to take the medical advice which he had received, and try the effects of a winter in Madeira. This he was enabled to do by the kindness of his father-in-law and his brother Samuel, who had taken the place

of a father to the younger brother, who had never known a father's love and care. He sailed for Madeira in October, accompanied by his wife and two little children, and his wife's sister, Miss Leonard, who had all a sister's love for him, and who was associated with him on the most intimate terms to the end of his life. A letter, written soon after his arrival, gives some of his experiences in the island, and will show also that the dark shadow had once more crossed his path :—

"*Funchal, Madeira, October* 31*st*, 1842.

"My Dear Brother,—You will, I trust, have learnt long before the receipt of this of our arrival here. An opportunity for writing *viâ* Portugal presented itself immediately on our landing; but I was at the time so harassed and perplexed by the many abortive attempts I was making to procure a suitable house, that I found it quite impossible to avail myself of that post. Miss Leonard, however, just managed to send a line to Bristol, in which she requested that you might be informed of the substance of her communication; and, no doubt, if her letter reached its destination, you have been for some time acquainted with the safe termination of our voyage.

"After considerable anxiety and labour, I succeeded in meeting with a house very much to my satisfaction, of which I will speak at a future time. I must now hasten to communicate what has brought anguish to our souls, and will, I am sure, awaken the painful

sympathy of my dear friends at home. Scarcely had we entered our house, and begun to enjoy the delight of rest after the great fatigues of the preceding fortnight, when our dear younger child sickened, to our great alarm. After three days' suffering she died, to our great consternation and inexpressible grief. You, my dear brother, will be able to feel for us in our present circumstances of sorrow, having more than once, and recently, suffered from the same cause. Our sainted child was eight months old, just beginning to recognise and give other marks of dawning intelligence. She was very beautiful, much admired, greatly her father's pride. I was conscious of deep affection, but not aware of the extent of that interest which she possessed in my heart, until I was taught it by the pang it cost to part with her.

"It was an addition to our affliction that we were compelled to bury her in this distant land; we had no alternative but such as would have involved us in great anxiety and expense. She lies among the ashes of our own countrymen, in a spot of ground belonging partly to the British Government, partly to the English merchants resident in the island. It is such a burying ground as you never saw, and never could see, perhaps, out of this island—beautiful as an Oriental flower-garden, for which it might be mistaken, were it not for the multitude of marble tablets which cover the interior of its lofty walls, and which reveal its purpose. It is the *strangers'* burying-place, appropriated exclusively for the long sleep of the English visitors to the island. It is now almost full, and almost full of the youthful victims of consumption. There, amid cypress-trees and geraniums, and profusion of foreign plants and

flowers, we have deposited the precious remains of our darling babe, not without the blessed hope that she shall one day be given to us again, for 'it is not the will of our Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.'

"Besides our domestic affliction, other circumstances of a distressing nature have occurred in the island since our arrival, in the excitement from which we could not but partake. What is called the rainy season has just now closed, and closed amid storms perfectly awful. Nothing of the kind has been known in the island within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. During several days and nights, amid incessant peals of thunder and sheets of lightning, the water descended, not like rain, but like mad torrents, threatening to deluge the whole population; and, indeed, its destructive effects have been of serious magnitude. Houses have been swept away; half of a neighbouring village has been carried into the sea with many of its inhabitants; the roads in the country are scarcely anywhere passable; the damage to property of almost every description is such, that it is not expected the island will recover the prosperity it enjoyed three weeks ago for years to come. The storm had but just subsided, when a tempest arose which surpassed in mischief on the sea what had already been witnessed on the land. On Wednesday evening last we were looking from our windows on six vessels lying below us in Funchal Bay, on Thursday morning five of them were wrecks. One of these unfortunate ones was the *Dart*, a sailing vessel from London, which had just arrived filled with invalids; another was the *Creole*, the American ship of which you have read so often in the newspapers in

connection with the misunderstanding between England and America. Five Portuguese were lost, and the whole crew of a Sardinian vessel, one of those wrecked.

"Notwithstanding the weather which I have described, we have had some glorious days, and the temperature has been high, and the air remarkably soft and salubrious. The fatigue of coming here was so great, and our trials since we came so severe, that I cannot report any considerable improvement in myself. I am, however, pretty well; and I anticipate that the fine weather, upon which I may calculate for many months to come, will have a very favourable—I trust, very decided—effect upon my health. I have cause for unspeakable thankfulness. I trust I am not, under the chastenings of God, insensible to His great goodness.

"I write in the greatest haste, fearing to lose the post, which is likely to leave this morning at an unmentioned hour. I hope you will write immediately. News from a distant land is like water to thirsty lips.

"Yours ever affectionately,

"D. Thomas."

The result of the sojourn in Madeira was not all that had been hoped. It was a time of much enjoyment to Mr. Thomas, notwithstanding his sorrows, and his anxieties respecting his health. He enjoyed the flowers, the beauty of the scenery, the great expanse of the Atlantic, his daily rides on horseback, and the society of a few friends whose acquaintance he made; all these things were plea-

sant to him; but he did not feel that he was getting much better as the weeks went by. The climate, he thought, was too relaxing for him. At any rate, there was not that rapid improvement which he had anticipated, and when the spring came he was still quite unable to return to his work. Under these circumstances, he decided to take a voyage to South America, in the hope that the bracing sea-air would do for him what Madeira had failed to accomplish. Accordingly, leaving his wife and sister to travel home by Gibraltar, he embarked on a vessel which touched at Funchal, on her way to Rio Janeiro, in April, 1843. The separation from those whom he loved, and the prospect of being alone for so long a period and in a foreign country, were very painful to him, dependent as he was, especially at that time, upon the presence and sympathy of his friends. But it proved to be a wise course which he had taken. The voyage, which he often talked of with interest, was in a high degree beneficial. He rapidly gained strength, and when he returned to Bristol in July, though he was not yet able to undertake active duties, it was evident that he was very much better, and that there was a good hope of the complete

re-establishment of his health. He remained quiet to the end of the year; and early in the following year went for four months to Torquay, a place in the rich beauties of which he always greatly delighted. Here he occasionally preached in a room, where some friends were gathered through the influence of Mr. W. Wilson, of Mansfield, who was then resident at Torquay, and from whom Mr. Thomas received much kindness and attention. He was invited to take the pastoral care of the little community for six months, and would probably have complied; but he needed stronger air than could be found at Torquay in the summer. He left, therefore, in June, and took apartments at Burnham, a village not far from Weston, on the Bristol Channel.

CHAPTER III.

"Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free.
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

IT was when Mr. Thomas was at Burnham that he was invited to preach at the church with which he was to be connected to the end of his life.

Highbury Chapel had been built during his absence from home. It was intended to meet the necessities of those who were living on the hills on the western side of Bristol, and who were unable to worship, without inconvenience, in the city chapels. A simple Gothic building, designed by Mr. Butterfield, the well-known Church architect, and situated on the top of St. Michael's Hill, on the spot where five Christian martyrs had been burned to death in the reign of Queen Mary, was opened for public

worship in July, 1843, when sermons were preached by the Rev. William Jay, of Bath, and the Rev. James Parsons, of York. Soon after the opening a Church, consisting of twenty-one persons, was formed. For twelve months the church remained without a minister. By the end of that period Mr. Thomas had returned to the neighbourhood of Bristol, and being favourably known through his six years' ministry on the other side of the city, he was asked to supply the pulpit, to which request he acceded. The building was crowded on the occasion of his preaching, many of his old friends at Bedminster having taken the opportunity of hearing again the minister to whom they had become so attached, and with whom they had parted with so much reluctance.

The impression produced was general and very strong, and the result was that a unanimous invitation was addressed to Mr. Thomas. This invitation he accepted, and his ministry at Highbury was commenced in July, 1844. Thus was begun a career of usefulness and ever-increasing prosperity which lasted for thirty-one years, and which was terminated only by the Master's call to service of a still nobler and more perfect kind.

There is little material to be found in the history of these thirty-one years out of which a biography could be made. There is a sense, indeed, in which they were very uneventful. They were uneventful in the sense that they were marked by few striking external incidents. Mr. Thomas did his work quietly, and without attracting much notice from the world outside, but he did it none the less surely, and gradually, through the blessing of God upon his labours, there grew up around him a Church that became, as years rolled on, stronger and stronger in itself, and more and more powerful in its influence upon the neighbourhood and the city.

"Like some tall palm, the noiseless fabric sprung;"

and in time, by steady, constant growth, Highbury became, it is believed, spiritually, as it is by physical situation, "as a city set on a hill."

It is right to say how much he was aided in his great work by the sympathy and co-operation of those who gathered about him, and especially by the large-heartedness and kindly spirit of his trusted friend, and, for a long time, his principal deacon, the late Mr. H. O. Wills.

It was as a preacher and spiritual guide that Mr.

Thomas was principally known. Not that he was not, in the truest sense, a citizen as well as a minister. He took a keen interest in politics, and in all the social and philanthropic movements of the day, and there are few who read the papers, or watch the course of public events, more thoroughly and thoughtfully than he did. Sometimes, indeed, he blamed himself for caring too much for the newspaper, and the ephemeral questions which it discussed. Certainly he had no sympathy with the spirit which separates itself in self-complacent isolation from the works and ways of men, and refuses to take any note of what is happening in a sinful world. But for active and prominent work on the platform, or in the committee-room, he felt that he was not fitted. He was, he said, too excitable. He feared, and perhaps rightly, that if he were to throw himself, heart and soul, into public activities external to his own immediate sphere, he would be disqualified for the faithful discharge of the higher duties which belonged to his office. Moreover, he had not the health or strength for much labour, beyond that which his position as minister of an influential Church demanded from him. He devoted himself, there-

fore, principally, to the work of preaching and the interests of his congregation. What his preaching was, in its general character and effects, can be rightly understood only by those who had frequent opportunities of listening to it. Those who heard him know what it was like; those who never heard him never will know. But two or three of its more obvious and prominent features may, perhaps, be described. One of these was the logical method and transparent clearness of the thought. Every sermon was "thought out," to use a common and significant expression. No ideas were allowed to remain in a region of mist and shadow. The mind was concentrated upon them when they had first dimly suggested themselves, until they became so distinct and intelligible to the preacher himself that he was able to make them distinct and intelligible to others also. He was impatient of all vagueness in conception, and never said anything without having a clear notion of what it was that he intended to say. Thus he succeeded in making himself easily understood, though, possibly he missed a reputation for profundity, which he might otherwise have enjoyed in the estimation of a certain class of hearers.

But he was not content with clearness in his thoughts. He was not satisfied unless they held a true, logical relation to each other, and to the general subject which he was considering. He would have them clear in themselves, and he would have the plan of their arrangement, and the nature of their interdependence, equally clear. There was harmony in his construction, and a certain progressive method which had an interest in itself, altogether apart from the interest attaching to the substance of the discourse, so that in listening to his sermons one experienced a pleasure not unlike that which is felt in following a demonstration in Euclid, or observing the symmetrical proportions of a beautiful building. Satisfaction was given to one's sense of fitness, and intellectual craving for completeness and consistency.

Again, there was noticeable in his preaching a remarkable combination of the spiritual and the practical. The Gospel of Christ and the law of Christ were wonderfully fused together, so that the Gospel seemed to be a part of the law, and the law a part of the Gospel. The glory of heaven was brought down to earth, and the common scenes and occupations of human life were illumined and

beautified by it. All that God had done for man was presented in such a way as not only to compel gratitude and awaken hope and joy, but also to inspire and constrain to loyal following in the Divine footsteps. The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ was carried, with its clear, searching, rebuking light, into the house of business and the home, and the dark and secret chambers of the mind. He was a preacher of righteousness, insisting upon right-doing, and the highest kind of right-doing, in every department and condition of life. "I like old James," he said once; "he was a reformer, and cared for the poor." Goodness was not goodness, in his view of it, unless it took some practical shape. But the righteousness which he preached was not something cold, mechanical, and passionless. It was itself a life, the conception of which was drawn from the vision of God in Christ Jesus, and the motive to which was found in the greatness and tenderness of the Divine love in human redemption. The relation of the Atonement to practical righteousness was the subject of one of his earliest and most striking addresses in Bristol. Throughout the whole of his ministry this relation was, more or less directly, illustrated.

Another characteristic of his preaching was its intensity. You felt that he was not only expressing thoughts which had come into his mind, but that his whole soul was uttering itself. The cry would seem to come sometimes from the inmost depths of his being. With a solemn, beseeching look upon his face, and with broken, pleading, at times almost agonising tones he delivered his message. It touched one, often, to the heart, to hear him speak of Christ. It was impossible not to feel that he was speaking of what he himself had seen and heard and loved, of One upon whose beauty he had looked, and by whose grace he had himself been helped, and of whose goodness to all who put their trust in Him he had abundant reason to be confident. "After preaching," he said, "the whole nature collapses like a balloon." This was not to be wondered at after such an expenditure of feeling and vital energy as his preaching involved.

Not less remarkable than his preaching were his prayers, which are described as being "like the breathings of a spirit wrapt in communion with God." They were very quiet, subdued in tone, perfectly simple and natural, and always marked by a devout and reverential spirit. This is as true of

his prayers in the family as of those he offered in the congregation.

He always wrote his sermons with tolerable fulness, though in the delivery he did not feel himself bound by what he had written. He never used his manuscript or any notes in the pulpit, feeling that he would rather be hampered than assisted by them.* To the end of his life he kept up the habit of making careful and conscientious preparation for his pulpit work, and never allowed himself to presume on the popularity he had won, or on the affection and forbearance of his people. So long as he was able to serve them at all, he gave them of his best.

It was not, however, in the pulpit only that he was esteemed, or that his influence was exerted. His presence was sought for in the homes and at the social gatherings of his friends, and he seldom went anywhere without bringing brightness and sunshine with him. From all official stiffness and

* This was owing, partly, to the indistinctness of his handwriting. At times he could scarcely read what he had written himself, and those to whom he wrote were often sorely puzzled to make out his words. He used to admit, indeed, that it was necessary for him to go himself with his letters, that he might interpret their meaning.

exclusiveness, and from every kind of affectation, he was absolutely free. He was simple and natural as a child; none entered with more zest and eagerness into whatever games or means of entertainment were provided; and he had a happy, genial humour which softened what was rugged, and gave a life and interest to what seemed dull and tame before. He had never been long in a room before he became the centre of a group, and he had a strange power of communicating the spirit which was in him, whatever it might happen to be, grave or gay, sad or joyous, to all who came within his reach. His conversation was always animated, and he was fond of keeping up a kind of good-humoured banter, a fence of words, at which he was very adroit, and which was always piquant, though there was never any grain of unkindness in it. Indeed, many who met him in private for the first time were astonished to find how full of fun and playfulness was the man with the somewhat stern and sorrowful countenance, and the solemnity of speech, whom they had heard in the pulpit. "I remember," writes one of his earliest friends, the Rev. Edward White, "his early preaching, its picturesque and intense vitality, its breathing after God, its frequent grandeur of con-

ception, its moral and affectionate tone, its genuine passion, its reverential desire to open the Scriptures. But those who knew him as well as I did once, will recollect perhaps best the charm of his private conversation, and the *ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα* of his friendly talk." Like his Master, he came eating and drinking, recoiling instinctively from everything mean or impure, but regarding nothing that was innocent as common or unclean, or beneath his notice and care.

But it was in the house of mourning that he was appreciated the most. "You don't know what he is till you are in trouble," wrote one of his daughters, when she was suffering from the illness which terminated in her death. And, truly, he knew the secret of giving consolation. His sympathy was so real, and so intelligent. He was so strong, and so gentle in his strength; his heart was so full of pity, and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth spoke such pitiful words, words that were like dew upon the parched herb. He was quick to understand the burden of every sorrow, and quick to make allowances, and delicate as a woman in his touch, always knowing the word that was wanted, and saying it a manner which brought it most

effectually home. It was very noticeable, too, how merciful he was in his judgments, and how compassionate and tender towards those who had become entangled in difficulties, or who had in any way laid themselves open to reproach. An incidental remark of his that is remembered may afford an illustration of this feature in his character. Speaking of one with whom he was slightly acquainted, and who was under a cloud, he said: "I always bow, since the trial, when everyone seemed to be condemning him." No one could accuse him of "hurting the hurt." Indignant as he was at evil-doing, he could not restrain the flow of his sorrow and pity for the evil-doer in the hour of punishment and distress. What he was in his own family, to his wife, and his sons and his daughters, no pen can describe, and it would be impious, perhaps, to attempt to analyse so sacred a relation. His children, at least, can understand something of the deep significance and unspeakable blessedness of being able to believe in the doctrine of the *Fatherhood* of God.

It was a happy life, upon the whole, that Mr. Thomas lived at Clifton. He had large capacities for suffering, but he also had large capacities for

enjoyment, and there was much in his circumstances and experience to contribute to his happiness. In the beauties of nature he found inexhaustible delights. In his boyhood he had been accustomed to spend whole days by himself in the woods, living upon little but the herbs and berries he could gather; and he rejoiced to find that, the older he grew, the greater became his fondness for natural objects and scenes. The fresh winds and open sky; the broad stretch of the Downs on which he was often in the habit of walking; the flowers—some flowers especially—which he loved to think of as the embodiments of the Creator's thoughts; all outward things, indeed, that were beautiful and pure, were sources of pleasure of which he never grew weary. And he had many opportunities of visiting the most favoured haunts of the spirit of natural loveliness. He knew his own country well, and he knew Switzerland almost as well, and loved her mountains as though they had been personal friends, so that he longed after their companionship, and missed them, as he once said after he had returned home, as if he had lost a child.

The following letters give an idea of his appre-

ciation of natural beauty, as well as of the strength of his home affections:—

"*Varalla, August 3rd*, 1860.

"My Dear Boys,—Instead of writing from here directly to mamma, I will write to her through you. First let me say that I have received the three letters she has sent me—the last this afternoon—for all which I am much obliged. It is a great joy to me when thus far away, amid strange scenes and persons, to find that you are all well and happy. It has been a special satisfaction to know that your visit to Clevedon was, altogether, so pleasant to you all. You will be glad to learn that I have been kept in safety up to this time; and that though my journeys have been fatiguing, I have enjoyed in a great degree the beautiful scenes through which I have passed.

"The next morning, after writing my letter from Zermatt, we started on the greatest day's journey in our tour—that over the S. Theodule. I was called at half-past two in the morning, and by four we were in the street with our alpenstocks in hand; our party of five, a pony for the two ladies, a guide who has been with us for the last ten days, and five men who were engaged to carry our luggage. It was nearly dark in the deep valley when we started. After three hours of climbing, rather than walking, we reached the snow. Then, dismissing the pony, we commenced our upward course through the snow. The excitement at first was pleasant; but soon the work became hard, then harder, then desperately hard. It was curious to see us each silently treading in the footsteps of his predecessor—from a little distance seemingly a tiny black line on the

great field of snow. On and up we went, hour after hour, puffing, panting, feeling as though it were a life-or-death business to reach the summit. After mighty efforts we all reached it at last, and found there a little hut, the highest inhabited house in Europe. The two men who stay there for a few months in the summer provided, as best they could, for our wants: a luncheon with coffee, and hot wine, wonderfully refreshed and re-invigorated us. The scene presented by the vast plains of snow, as we ascended, was very grand; but it was far surpassed by that which met our eyes as we looked from the summit on the Italian side. A maze of mountain tops covered with snow was before us. I felt as though I had never seen Switzerland before. No account can give you a true idea of it. I hope you may see it one day, and then you will remember that your father crossed the S. Theodule, and wondered at it before you.

"It was easy work going down through the snow to the Italian valleys. Very deep and very beautiful are those valleys.

"The next day, after we had been in Arctic regions, we were in Chatillon, amid glorious fertility, and in a climate that seemed tropical. We have since been up mountains, then down valleys, admiring exceedingly the loveliness and grandeur that everywhere abound.

"This is a considerable town, with a very foreign look. Very high hills, clothed with trees, overhang it on all sides. One of these hills is called Sacra Monte. Roman Catholics make pilgrimage to the top of it, where there is a grand church; and on the hill, from the bottom to the top, there are, altogether, about fifty chapels, full of curious things, figures life-like, taken

from Sacred History, of which I hope to speak to you some early day.

"To-morrow we go to Orta, on the lake having that name. From there I will write to your dear mamma.

"And now, dear boys, I must close this short account of a bit of my tour. You are again at school trying, I hope, to improve yourselves, to do what is right, to please, and be like, the Saviour. I send you both my love, the same quantity exactly to each.

"Love to dear mamma, Louie, Nelly (of whom I do not think the less because I am not able to write to her also), Lillie, Charlotte, Jessie, baby. God bless you all, and have you in His keeping. Love to Aunt Lou and Aunt Caroline.

"Dear Boys, your affectionate

"PAPA."

"*Neuhausen, August 4th*, 1872.

"MY DEAR LOU,—I must write to you during this rather long absence; and to-day, Sunday, with its leisure, offers a good opportunity.

"You will have heard through the various letters sent home by one or other of our party what our movements have been, and how, thus far, our journey has been successful, and one, indeed, of great enjoyment. The weather broke up before we left S. Moritz, and the pleasant scene and friends there, and it has not returned to a settled condition since; but we have intervals of fine weather and gleams of sunshine, especially to-day, in which we rejoice exceedingly. There is nothing for the sights of earth and sky like fair and bright weather intermitting with the dark and stormy.

"When we left the mountains the day before yester-

day, and came to Lake Constance, with its smiling and comparatively flat country, it was a sensible relief to me, and pleasant otherwise. The grandeur and power of the mountains seem to oppress you while they delight, when you are long among them, and the beauty of plain, and long sweep of water, is singularly grateful. You breathe more freely, and things seem more intelligible, and human, and homeish. I have experienced this repeatedly. Lake Constance was all new to me. It was, unfortunately, a wet day on Friday, when we steamed over a great part of it, calling at several towns on its borders. Those towns, however, and the rich country at their back, looked very beautiful. We could not stay at Constance, the train, waiting for us, being inexorable. I wanted much to see the memorials of Huss, and Jerome of Prague. It must be more than four centuries since they laid down their lives for their convictions, and to-day their names are the most beautiful and the greatest things in Constance, and will be to the end of its history, so true it is that glory follows self-denial and suffering.

"We are now, on this quiet and blessed Sunday, two or three miles from the town of Schaffhausen, in an hotel, on a lofty bank of the Rhine, just opposite the falls of the great historic river, and in the sound of their everlasting roar. We have not crossed yet to the other side, where the falls look their best, but now, from this window, the view is most lovely and grand, and (for we are never satisfied) making us think of, and long to see, Niagara. That may never be—scarcely can be; but there may be sights better in store, and before which earthly scenes will be forgotten. We are very happy together, no one in our little roving circle dis-

turbing the peace and gladness by temper, or selfishness, or aught else out of harmony with the scenes through which we pass. . . . . It has added greatly to our happiness to have good accounts of all we love at home.

"We leave here to-morrow for Zurich and Lucerne, staying at the latter place two or three days, as we like things. Then we go to Interlaken. I mean to try to get at the Godwins, who are high up in the mountains there. Perhaps we may try to get from Interlaken to Vevay through a country I have never seen, but of which I remember reading some glowing accounts by Bunsen, in his Life; but this may not be practicable.

"We all send our best love to you, dear Lou. God keep you ever, my dear eldest child, and make your life useful and blessed. We shall be delighted to see you and yours again. Give our affectionate remembrances to Mr. Robinson, and to any others at home in your household, and receive much love, dear Lou,

"From your affectionate

"Father."

In his books, too, he always found much solace and satisfaction. He read much, and eagerly, and was never happier than when he had met with a volume that was thoroughly to his taste, and had a quiet hour in which he could indulge in the perusal of it. He liked to have books about him even if he was not reading them, and it was astonishing, sometimes, to see the number that he would carry

up to his bed-room at night, that they might be on the table by his bedside. Often he laughed at himself, as he went off with his candle in one hand, and his burthen of literature in the other, but he would seldom consent to leave any one of the friends he had chosen behind.

One book there was in which he especially delighted. This was his Wordsworth. His feeling for Wordsworth amounted almost to a passion. Not that he had a blind admiration for him. He was alive to the poet's defects, and thought that he erred, at times, in seeking in Nature what could be found only in God Himself; but he loved him notwithstanding, with constant and increasing affection. A volume of his poems was always by the side of his desk; it usually accompanied him when he retired for the night, and it never failed to find a place in his portmanteau, when he went away from home. He was unable, he said, to express what it was he found so soothing in Wordsworth's poetry. He found a repose in it, a harmonising, quieting influence which he found in no other writer, and when he was feeling unwell, or vexed, it was the best medicine he could take. In the very words there was a charm that served

to tranquillise his spirit, and sometimes lulled him to sleep when he was anxious and wakeful. He knew every part of the "Excursion" well, and could lay his hand, at once, on any passage. The whole poem he declared to be "delicious." Those who were with him during his last visit to the Lakes, which was in the summer before he died, will long remember what a pleasure it was to him to point out the spots with which the name of the poet is especially associated, and they will remember, too, how long he stood by his grave in the Grasmere Churchyard, alone, and absorbed, apparently in meditations that were suggested by the scene.

Very keen also was the joy which he had in his friendships. There were many with whom he came in contact during the course of his life whose affections and confidence he completely secured, and between whom and himself there existed mutual appreciation and regard, and a large portion of the happiness which fell to his lot was due to the frequent intercourse with them which he enjoyed. He was very true and sincere in his attachments. No friend of his had ever to complain of being slighted and forgotten. Indeed, there

were few things which gave him greater pleasure than to meet with the companions of his youth, and talk with them of old times. When his former fellow-student and dear friend Mr. Richard came to stay with him, for a week, two or three years ago, he seemed to be brimful, during the whole period, of happy excitement and content; and whenever he spoke, as he often did, of those whom he had known in early life, it was with singular affection and tenderness. In addition to these sources of satisfaction, there was the comfort which he had in his home concerns, the pleasure that he felt in the growth and prosperity of his Church, and last though not least, the joy, not to be spoken of, which he had in his Lord.

But he had his share of sufferings. There were clouds through which he had to pass, as well as sunshine, and some of them were very dark and oppressive. Three years after his settlement at Highbury, he was sorely tried by the death, under distressing circumstances, of his eldest son, John Foster, a bright, intelligent little boy, who met with his death through an accident before he had completed his second year. He had fallen in running, and injured his eye with a stick which was in his

hand. At first, not much danger was apprehended, but alarming symptoms presently appeared, and lock-jaw was the terrible result. It is needless to speak of the anguish which this gave to his father's heart. There are some who have a vivid recollection of him, as he stood weeping bitterly, with his hands upon the rocking-horse which had been his little son's favourite plaything, and which had been a solace to him in the time of his great suffering. In 1851 he suffered again through the death of a very dear and intimate friend, Mr. Robert Norris, a man who was well and honourably known in Bristol, and who is still remembered with reverence. Mr. Thomas was strongly attached to him, and never ceased to cherish the memory of his beautiful character. In 1855, he lost two children within twelve days. One was an infant who had been delicate from her birth, the other a little boy between two and three years of age, who was named after himself, and to whom he was greatly devoted. His sad, earnest look, as he came from the chamber of death, is remembered, and the words which fell from his lips: "This house is now a grave. We must lift our affections to the place where he is gone. He was the light of the house. It is a com-

fort to think that no guilt is connected with his death. It comes from God direct. I think he was a sweet little child."

Apart from these, and other similar causes of sorrow, there were seasons through which he passed of much depression and inward pain. It was impossible that one with his introspective habits, and thoughtful, anxious disposition, should be always gay and light of heart; and he was not always happy. There were moods in which the burden of life, and the mystery of death, pressed heavily upon him. He felt, sometimes bitterly, his own ignorance and impotence. Once he said that he had been going over everything, and had concluded that he knew "nothing—absolutely nothing at all." He would lie awake at night thinking of death, which was often before his mind, and of eternity, of going on and on for ever, until the thought became all but insupportable. He had a great human shrinking from death, and dreaded especially a slow dissolution; though sometimes in the thought of dying there was a feeling of sunshine and freshness, as though it were a more abundant life that was before him. He had, moreover, a melancholy sense of human infirmity and incompleteness. In

a letter to a friend, he writes, after referring to his physical weakness: "The world within! What a work it is to set all right and beautiful within! to be done somewhere, one hopes, but only by a divine hand, and it seems as though it must be after the discipline of ages." It was a real grief to him to witness the follies of men, the littleness of their aims, the worldliness of their ambitions, their neglect of what was truly precious and weighty, and their race for wealth, which, while life itself, with all its opportunities, was fast galloping away, struck him as being nothing short of insanity. While there was much in his life to minister to his happiness, there was much also that filled him with sadness.

In the year 1856 he visited the Continent, and the following extracts from a diary which he wrote on the occasion may be read with interest, as giving some insight into his character, and showing his habit of reflecting upon what he saw, and turning it to useful account. He is writing to his wife:—

"I left my home yesterday morning with more reluctance than on any former occasion of this kind; partly, I am sure, because you, dear E., and your dear children, make home every year more dear, and more difficult to leave. However, I needed rest and change.

I trust I left with God's blessing on me, and on those I have left behind. Travel in a foreign land has more danger in it to the heart than to the outward person. May God keep my heart right during the journey, and may it be a time of communion with Him, as well as of instruction and pleasure in the way ordinarily expected.

"The ride to London was delightful; the country glorious; the fields golden, the reapers busy at this early date. I got, with my dear companions, through the trouble of passports, &c. more easily than usual. How little these things would cost us if we could make up our minds to the petty vexations which must arise, and discipline ourselves to patience under little trials. It is with a journey of this kind as with the whole journey of life. Our happiness is most disturbed by little things, which we suffer to prevail over us.

"Passing by Lombard-street, I was led by an impulse of the moment to go into the banking-house where I spent two years of my life. I spoke to two of the clerks, who were seated at the very desk before which I left them twenty-six years ago. How monotonous their outward life—how varied, in comparison, mine! What means of serving God, and making the present life happy, conferred on me, denied these two old acquaintances. I feel that I have done so little for the high cause I have had such opportunities of serving, that I was sad rather than self-congratulatory. Perhaps, it would have been better for me if I, too, had been chained to one of those desks all my life. God forbid that His goodness to me should be ultimately to my condemnation.

"Left London at half-past five. Kent, a very

interesting county to look at. I thought of the two who at separate times travelled this road with me in a journey like this, who are now in their graves. Each died in the year following that in which he travelled with me, and looked with me on those fields just with the same interest that I looked on them, without them. Might I not have been of much service to them on those journeys?

"*From Dover to Calais.*—An exciting, pleasant passage to me. The heavens magnificent—the stars out with almost the brightness of a clear frosty night, and yet with their summer softness. How much I lose from not knowing more of what science teaches of those glories of the heavens, and from not cultivating more the feeling they inspire.

"*Paris.*—Walked for a couple of hours and admired the vast improvements in the city. It is truly a magnificent place. If this Louis Napoleon could make the people he governs as beautiful as he has made their chief city! He will find that there are elements in human nature not to be wrought upon so easily as the stones and mortar of the capital. His success hitherto is something wonderful, but it is impossible he can go on for ever as he has done. A people like these will not always bear to have his hard hand on their mouth and pen. . . .

"At a place called La Roche our train stopped opposite to another on its way to Paris. Our attention was immediately directed to a carriage opposite our own, of royal splendour. It proved to be of Imperial splendour rather, for the Frenchman with us said that the gentleman who was sitting alone in a corner of it, deep in a book, was the Emperor himself. He was

returning from Plombières. He looked younger than I expected, and altogether better.

"On the Sardinian frontier, when passports and luggage were examined, we were driven into a dark, dismal yard, belonging to the Government. One of our fellow-passengers was found to have in his large trunk a number of articles he intended to smuggle. It was miserable to see him in that dark and gloomy place and hour, *detected*, and punished by being left behind, with his baggage, in the hands of the authorities. So will those who are holding to things unlawful, trying to get to heaven with hidden sins, be detected one day, perhaps in the dismal hour of death—for certain, under the great examination on the frontiers of eternity, and be left behind by Him who conducts His own to the glorious country."

On a train stopping where there was no station, he writes:—

"There was no reason that we could see, but there was, of course, a good reason—some danger to be averted, unknown to us. We had no explanation. So it is often in the railway of life: we are checked in our career without a reason being given. It is better the *passengers* should not know. . . .

"Read with much interest Robertson's 'Lectures on Poetry:' a man we should think could be little spared from among the public teachers of the day. Like Foster, like Arnold, more imaginative far than the latter."

After travelling in the dark towards Italy:—

"Night soon closed in upon us after we left Lyons. We all three began to doze. I was ever waking, how-

ever, and it was a strange feeling to be moving through a country of which one caught only the most dim and indistinct sight, even of the nearest objects, seeing just a corner of a street, the gable of a house, a shop sign. Is not the spirit's journey through life much like that journey in the dark? How little known to us are the things the spirit sees. We see them indistinctly, partially, but for a moment. It is travelling in the dark. Will not the last journey of the spirit be like this travelling in the dark? How obscurely will the objects that will flit before us appear—shapeless, uncertain. But there will be a sure conductor to the spirit that will seek His guidance and defence.

"*Como.*—We are just preparing for the lake. I associate Dr. Arnold more than anyone else with this lake. I expect immensely from the beauty it has to show. The day is glorious. Would that you could be with us to-day, and the girls and boys. How they would have entered into the enjoyments before us. The day will, perhaps, soon come when their father's wanderings will be over; God grant he may then rest amid those scenes which are fairer even than these. God keep my mind to-day pure and tranquil and loving in the scene I anticipate.

"*Milan.*—From the Cathedral we drove to the Refectory, where Leonardo's great picture is to be seen of the Last Supper. Man's neglect and time have done their worst; still, what remains is wonderful. I felt the power of the picture, and the truth and beauty of Wordsworth's sonnet upon it.

"*Botzen.*—We reached Verona between seven and eight. Ruskin's lectures at Edinburgh had made me very desirous to see Verona. Found him true in the

main, but his account is exaggerated. The situation is not so superior to Edinburgh as he represents it. It is very fine, however, and the streets picturesque. Saw the house of the Capulets, if the name on the wall, and our *commissionaire*, are to be trusted. The Roman amphitheatre is most interesting.

"Como exceeded all I expected to find in it. I looked for great beauty, but not so much magnificence. Those lofty sides, those Alpine ranges, formed no part of my conception. May those beautiful views return yet,—so long as I live.

"After four hours at Verona we set off, by rail, for Venice. I was more excited in approaching that city than I ever remember to have been in approaching any other, except when I first drew near to London.

"I found the city more what I had pictured to myself than any other place. A man may have pretty correct ideas of towns from descriptions, and pictures, not of great scenes of nature. But there was a feeling in Venice which nothing but seeing it could give—supremely interesting, beautiful, grand.

"I spent the Saturday, August 16th, my forty-fifth birthday, in sight-seeing; a very pleasant day, not uninstructive. God make this year the holiest and most useful of my life!

"I have seen now the best of the Tyrol scenery, and do not expect to see the like of it again. May these scenes return often to my thoughts and beautify my mind, and help to fix my admiration on Him who has made them so glorious."

For twenty years Mr. Thomas continued to do his work in Bristol in quietness and comparative

obscurity. His influence was gradually extending itself, but he seldom preached away from home, and he never could be persuaded to publish anything, so that he was little known through the country, even in the denomination to which he belonged. And with this condition of things he was well content. He did not court public observation, but rather avoided and disliked it. He loved the sanctities of home and the service of his own people, and had no hunger for a wide-spread reputation.

But in the year 1865 he came into more general notice through his appointment to the Chairmanship of the Congregational Union. The office was one which, as he truly said in his inaugural address, he had never coveted for himself, and he shrank from the publicity, and the various responsibilities connected with it; but he was induced to accept it, partly through the pressure of his friends, and partly, perhaps, from a feeling that his experience and reflection might enable him to say something that would be of advantage to his brethren. His addresses, the substance and effect of which are generally known, and need not be here referred to, cost him much in the preparation of them, and he

was very weary of them before the time came for their delivery, and often doubted his wisdom in allowing himself to be brought into so prominent and, to his mind, unenviable a position as that which he had been invited to occupy. But it was well that he had not yielded to his own inclinations. For there can be little doubt that the usefulness of his life was very largely increased through the widening of the circle of his influence which resulted from his assumption of the rank to which his abilities and character entitled him. From the year of his presidency he was recognised as one of the leaders in his denomination, and began to take a more active part in public affairs. But his temperament had not changed. It was from a sense of duty, rather than from taste, that he appeared before the world, and he was not sorry when, through failing health, he was compelled, in the last years of his life, to retire again into seclusion.

In May, 1866, he preached the London Missionary Sermon in Surrey Chapel, a memorable sermon, which has left an impression upon many minds that will never be effaced. He was very nervous, and began to speak so hurriedly, and with the appearance of being so little at his ease, that a fellow-

countryman of his, and a great preacher, who understood what preaching was, was alarmed, and said in an emphatic way to one who was sitting beside him, "He is sure to break down." But as he proceeded he forgot his discomforts, and when the first ten minutes were over he fell into his most felicitous mood, and held the attention of the large congregation to the close of the sermon. The shape of the chapel was unlike anything to which he had been accustomed, and he was bewildered, at first, by the peculiarity of his position. He knew not where to look, but he was much helped, he said afterwards, when his eye caught the kindly, sympathetic face of his friend, the Rev. J. C. Harrison. Then he felt at home, and spoke freely, and with singular power. Not a few, perhaps, will feel with the Rev. Newman Hall, who told his congregation, after Mr. Thomas's death, that it was the most effective sermon he had ever heard. But it would be out of harmony with the spirit which it breathed to multiply its praises.

In the autumn of the same year Mr. Thomas was invited to leave his work in Bristol, and become minister of the New College Chapel at St. John's Wood. For some time he was undecided as to the

reply which he should give. He felt that it would be a relief and advantage to himself in many respects to change the sphere of his ministry, and he believed also, in his humility, that to the congregation who had listened only to his voice for more than twenty years, it would not be an unmixed evil if he were to sever his connection with them. He was always of opinion that occasional changes were desirable both for minister and people. But when it came to the point he found that it was impossible to leave his old friends. The representations which he received from them of the service he had done them, and their expressions of grateful love and esteem, were such as he could not disregard, and he decided, though not without much inward conflict, to remain where he was.

In October, 1867, he preached before the Congregational Union, at Manchester, a sermon which is described as having produced a powerful impression, and an impression of the best kind. The substance of it will be found in another part of this volume. A year or two later some signs of declining strength began to appear. Mr. Thomas suffered much from nervous weakness, and experienced sensations at times in his head and side, which led him to fear

the possibility of paralysis. These fears were happily never realised, but it was found necessary to take a lengthened rest, and to be content, for the future, with one service on the Sunday. In the winter of 1870 Mr. Armitage, a young man of wide culture and high attainments, now minister at Oldham, in Lancashire, was invited to help Mr. Thomas in his work. Mr. Armitage soon secured the warm friendship of those with whom he came into contact, and will long be remembered by many with very sincere affection and esteem. When he left, Mr. Thomas was assisted for a year by his son Arnold, who had then just finished his course at Cambridge, and afterwards by the Rev. H. E. Bottomley, now of Coventry, who was with him up to the time of his death, and of whose character and services he felt that he could never speak too highly. It added much to his comfort during the last year or two of his life to be favoured with so efficient a colleague.

CHAPTER IV.

"Life! we've been long together
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear—
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear:
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not Good Night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me Good Morning."

"We must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God."

THE last year of Mr. Thomas's life was one of much anxiety and sorrow. There came upon him blow upon blow, loss upon loss. In a letter written to Mr. Richard early in 1874, he refers to one of the great sources of his trouble; and the letter, for the sake of its other references, may perhaps be read with interest:—

"I have watched," he writes, "with deep interest your successful course on the Continent, and shall be glad to learn that you have returned home vigorous and bright.

"I felt very much for you and Mrs. Richard in

that overwhelming trouble that came upon you last summer.*

"I have been in much anxiety since last May about my youngest daughter but one, Jessie. Attack followed attack of hemorrhage from the lungs; and all through these months we have been watching and nursing her, doubtful of the issue. Just now hope preponderates, but with many misgivings.

"I felt much the death of Mr. Winterbotham. I had known him long, and seen from first to last a good deal of him. I spent a very pleasant evening with him at his rooms some months ago, and received, a few weeks before he left home, a most genial letter from him. What faults he had were chiefly those of manner, and in so far as they were otherwise, they were quite on the surface of his character. He was a very true man, and religious to the core of his being. It looks as if Mr. Binney were about to leave us. That will be a loss which I shall much feel. I have had a great deal of pleasant intercourse with him the last ten years; and he has been a father, most wise and tender, to my son Arnold."

The hope of which he speaks, with respect to the illness of his daughter Jessie, was not to be fulfilled. She became gradually weaker; and when the year 1875 opened, it was evident to herself and to all that she could not expect to live to its close. Nor was this his only cause of grief. Another,

* This refers to the drowning of two of Mrs. Richard's nieces, the Misses Fell, at Ilfracombe.

equally severe, had appeared since his letter to Mr. Richard, in the serious illness of his eldest daughter and first-born child, Mrs. E. S. Robinson. She, too, had fallen under the power of the same grim, relentless enemy, and for some months had been slowly wasting away; so that it seemed doubtful which of the two sisters would be the first to reach the inevitable end. Their father's suffering in their sufferings was constant and acute, and at times almost more than his heart could bear. "I have been a good deal ailing of late," he wrote in February, 1875, "and am now very much a prisoner at home. We are all laden with care and anxiety. The darkness thickens on our path. I am much afraid your dear mother will break down, though till now she has been greatly sustained. This evening she is at Sneyd Park. Dear L., she is much changed, and changing."

In the month of April there came a new trouble to the household through the unexpected death of Mr. Thomas's only grandchild, a little boy of much promise and beauty, about whom the affections of the old home had become very closely entwined. He died, after a brief illness, from congestion of

the brain. The day after his funeral was the day of Mrs. Robinson's death—a happy day for her, when she was permitted to lay down the burden she had long borne with a noble patience, and with constant, unselfish thought for others, and to enter into the heavenly joy and service.

Three weeks later she was followed to the land of rest by her younger sister, who died early in the morning of the first Sunday in May, to the inexpressible grief of those whose business it had been for two years to cherish her slowly-fading life, and minister to her wants. It was better for her that she should leave all her weariness and strife, and go to the Saviour whom she trusted and loved; but it was a dark day in the home when her sweet soul passed away, and the anguish of her father was such as only a heart like his could feel. He mourned over his lost child with a great lamentation. "It has burst at last," he wrote to his son on the morning of her death; "this heavy cloud that has been so long hanging over us. Our darling, our pride and joy, was taken to her rest at about four o'clock this morning. To-day's Sabbath is for her with her Lord. . . . We are all sick, and

sore, and broken-hearted. The last two years of the sweet life of our darling so entered into our own life that we feel this stroke in a way that must be, in some measure, peculiar to ourselves, and beyond what I can express. May God's Spirit support our faith, and help us with His consolations."

By these sharp strokes, coming one after the other, and following, as they did, a long period of sorrowful and anxious watching, the health of Mr. Thomas could not fail to be affected. He was weakened in body, and bruised in spirit; and though he went about his work, and did it with conscientious thoroughness, he could not throw off—he would not have done so, perhaps, if he could—the heavy burden of his grief. "It filled the room up of his absent child." It was ever with him—a haunting, subduing, solemnising presence. He had a strong faith, but he had a most human heart; and he could not but suffer when its treasures were taken away, even though he believed that they were carried up into heaven.

In the summer he spent some weeks with his family in the north of England, visiting first Yorkshire, and afterwards the Lake District. It

was a time of much quiet enjoyment; and often, when the heavy and the weary weight of his trouble was modified in its pressure, he was even bright and happy. To most of his party the country was new, and it was a great pleasure to him to introduce them to its beauties—beauties unsurpassed, as he declared, in any part of the the world. He spent a week at Ambleside, and delighted to walk in the quiet summer evenings in the fields near Fox How, and by the banks of the Rotha, the stream after which he had named his youngest child. They were "better than a sermon, those fields," he said. From Ambleside he went to Keswick, where he spent a week with much satisfaction. He was frequently on the lake; and he seemed sometimes, as he sat in the boat, to be drinking in, and feeding upon, the loveliness by which he was surrounded. A climb to the top of Skiddaw was proposed, and he surprised those with him, and himself too, by the comparative ease with which he reached the summit of the mountain. That was a happy day with him. The skies were bright; the air was fresh and invigorating; the scenery was looking at its best; and he was feeling well and strong, and in

a mood to enjoy the grace and glory of nature. As Derwentwater suddenly burst on his view in the descent, he stood for a minute or two fascinated, and said he had never in his life seen anything more beautiful. But amid his pleasure sad thoughts were not far away. He was thinking much of those that were gone. "How Jessie would have enjoyed this!" he exclaimed, as he approached the cairn at the top of the mountain, and the plains towards the Scottish border came into view; and after he had rested awhile from the labours of the ascent, he asked one of his daughters to sing, "There is a land of pure delight," a hymn of which Jessie had been fond, and which had often been sung to her in her illness. He had a desire to listen on "Skiddaw's lonely height" to the strains which had been heard so often by the bedside of his suffering child.

A letter, written from Keswick, to Mr. J. F. Norris, the son of his old friend, gives expression to his feelings and thoughts at this period:—

"*Keswick, July 26th*, 1875.

"My dear John,—I promised to send you a line during my absence, and must defer the fulfilment no longer, although there is, for this summer, an unusual brightness about this morning which tempts me out. We have, on

the whole, had a pleasant time, so far as outward things are concerned, since we left home. The weather has not been so bad with us as with you; not so bad as, notwithstanding sullen and leaden skies, and not infrequent rain, to hinder our appreciation of the beauty and glory of much that we have seen. You were at Ilkley with your mother, and, I believe, also in this Lake district, so I need say nothing about either. They are beautiful, exceedingly, especially the latter. I have felt, as on former occasions, and perhaps more than ever, how this place is haunted by the spirits of the great men who lived and worked in it. There are great men living still, but we certainly have no Coleridge or Wordsworth, perhaps no Arnold. Miss Martineau, about whom we made inquiries at Ambleside, is still occasionally seen wheeled about in her chair. She has a nature difficult to comprehend. In her last public utterance concerning herself she declared herself to be happier than ever now that she did not believe in any God who made this wonderful and beautiful world.

"I had thought that travel and change of scene would have relieved me, and those about me, more than they have done of our burden of mournful thoughts. But I find we carry with us the weight, and little diminished, everywhere. We meet the dead in every scene. I did not care to leave home this time, because I felt it was, somehow, leaving them behind; but that was an error.

"How dear the memory of your father is to me to this day. And it will be to the end, until we meet again, if it please God to make me worthy of this. The many hours I passed in real fellowship of mind and heart with him, in my own house, and in that dimly-lighted room of his in Burlington Buildings return to my thoughts,

when we talked, as I remember, so very slowly, and in so low a tone. I recall how Mr. Burder and I agreed that it was a privilege to sit in the same room. I felt always in the presence of a nature greatly superior to my own, and thank God now for my knowledge and remembrance of him. I seem to have his sympathy in my present sorrows.

"Give my affectionate remembrance to your wife and to Robin—it is of no use adding, to your sweet little girl—and believe me, dear John, to the end,

"Your affectionate friend,

"David Thomas."

Mr. Thomas came home the better, apparently, for his change and rest; but he had not been long at his work before he began to feel weak and unwell, and he made up his mind that he must soon resign the office which he had held so long. He would have done this before, had it not been for the pain which he knew would be involved in the severance of so many and such sacred ties, and from which, with the loving tenacity of his nature, he shrank back. He could not bear, he said, the wrench of parting from his friends. But now he began to see that such parting was inevitable. His strength failed him so that he became weary after but a slight exertion, and he seldom went out except to visit the sick. This he did, sometimes, when he

was scarcely well enough, and in opposition to the wishes of those about him, who saw how jaded and ill he looked. He seems to have had an impression that the end was not far distant. "Thus we go on," he said in a letter written to his brother in September, after speaking of his ailments, "through sickness and health, comforts and discomforts, to the journey's end. May it end well with us both, as end soon it must."

All through the month of October his health was very uncertain. On the third Sunday in the month he was far from well, and had not intended to preach, but the occasion was a special one, collections having been announced on behalf of the Children's Hospital, and, rather than disappoint the friends of the institution, he determined to make an effort and preach, which he did with great vigour and power, and apparently without any injurious consequences. On the following Sunday he preached what proved to be his last sermon, "on the pure and undefiled religion." He was very doubtful whether he should be able to take the service on the next Sunday. But he was anxious that, so long as he was their minister, his congregation should not feel that they could not depend upon him, and he resolved, late in

the week, to appear, if possible, in his usual place. On the Friday he was feeling very unfit for work, but he seemed a little better on the Saturday, and was able to prepare for the next day. He was intending to preach on Paul's address to the Jews at Antioch, a sermon that was to be a continuation of a series on the Acts of the Apostles, on which he had long been engaged. He dined as usual on Saturday afternoon, and after dinner, at which he had appeared to be in fairly good spirits, he went to his study to lie down, according to his common practice. At about five o'clock he rose from the sofa and drew near to his desk with the intention of proceeding with his sermon. But the sermon was never to be completed. He had scarcely taken his pen when he was seized with a spasm of the heart which startled and alarmed him. He hurriedly left the room, and, being oppressed by difficulty in breathing, begged a daughter who was at hand to open the outer door; then he sank into a chair in the hall, and appeared to be in much bodily distress. The doctor was immediately sent for. At length he was enabled, with the help of his wife, to reach his bedroom. All through the night he suffered severely—so severely that he was not able to say

many words, and those that he did speak had reference chiefly to his sufferings. "My God," he exclaimed once, "knows what I am enduring." And at another time, "My God knows all my mind." He said, also, that Jessie had asked him "not to be long," and that he should not be long; and begged that his love might be given to his absent children, and to his congregation. After several hours of weary strife and pain, the doctor, who had just been administering a soothing draught, asked him how he felt: "Dying!" he replied; "dying! dying!" in fainter and fainter tones; then there came a peculiar glow and brightness over his face, and before any of those around him could realise what was happening, he passed into the presence of the Lord. The shock to those whom he left behind was terrible, unspeakable. But they could not weep for him. It had been with him as he had wished. Writing to his wife in 1845, he had said, "What a fine thing was that closing scene in Arnold's life: may my end be like his!" So, in the mercy of God, it was.

The scene at Highbury Chapel on that morning will long be remembered. The congregation were assembled with the expectation of hearing their

minister's voice as usual. They were told that they would never hear that voice again. The news fell upon them like a thunderbolt. It could not be believed at first, and when the truth could no longer be resisted there were many tearful eyes, and many sad and aching hearts. He was a man greatly beloved, and it was a bitter and an evil thing to be told that he was gone, and that they would see his face no more.

The funeral was on the following Friday. An impressive service was held in the Chapel, which was filled with mourners. Thence, the long procession moved through streets hushed into unusual quietness, to Arno's Vale Cemetery, and there, in a grave which loving hands had lined and beautified with flowers, the mortal part of David Thomas was laid to rest, by the side of his dear Jessie—a happy emblem, as it seemed, of a truer re-union in the great home of God.

SERMONS.

APPROVAL OF CHRIST.*

2 Cor. v. 9.

"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him."

THERE is no article of the Christian creed which receives more ready or general assent than that which affirms that Christ will judge the quick and the dead. And yet, there is little or no anticipation on the part of many Christians of a Divine judgment to be passed hereafter on their character and works. They look for admission, on their death, to the heavenly world, on the ground of their faith in Christ, not so much, often not at all, for any expression of His judgment on that *life* which has followed their faith in Him. This is not difficult to explain. There is no satisfaction in the thought that they shall know the measure of their Lord's approval of them like that which they find

* Annual Sermon of the London Missionary Society, preached at Surrey Chapel, May, 1866.

in simply believing that when they leave this world they shall enter into His rest and joy. There is nothing to attract them in the image of the judgment-seat, as there is in the vision of heaven. They willingly lose sight of that which yields them no pleasure in the contemplation of it. And they do this the more readily for the partial views which they often hold of their relation to Christ's office and work. They so interpret Christ's obedience in their place, and His sufferings for the wrong of their life, that there seems nothing left of their own personal character and conduct which can be open to judicial inspection. They are so clothed in Christ's righteousness that there is nothing seen in them to forbid or limit the Divine approval of them. They are in Christ, and that is so explained in their doctrine as to leave no room for any judgment to be passed upon them other than that which is passed upon Christ. But that is not according to the Christian doctrine. The Scripture does not make the justification of a sinful man, when he believes in Christ, to exempt him from the Divine judgment upon his after life as the servant of Christ.

On the contrary, it teaches, nowhere more

especially than in the text and its connection, that the believer, as surely as the unbeliever, will pass through a process of judgment; that the saint not less than the sinner will know what the great Lord of all thinks of him and of his work. Paul writes here, that he knows that if his earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, he has a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; that he is confident that if absent from the body he would be present with the Lord. But this unwavering assurance of his own future security and blessedness in no way or degree obscures his sense of the solemn account which he must hereafter give of himself. He does not see before him his house and home in the heavens more distinctly than he does the tribunal of judgment. He is not more sure that he will be saved by Christ than he is that he will be judged by Him. He is accepted now *in* the Beloved; he has no doubt about it; but it remains to be seen how far he will be accepted *of* Him. And this belief in his Lord's future judgment upon him being once admitted, it becomes his supreme solicitude that his judgment should be a favourable one. He was far from being indifferent to the judgment of his brethren; he strove to

please men as far as he righteously could for his own sake, and yet more for the sake of the cause which he would serve; but it was a very small thing with him to be condemned or approved of his brethren, or of the whole world, compared with what it was to be approved of his Lord. He cares for this as he cares for nothing else. He is now well nigh worn out with the toil and suffering of his life. The outward man is perishing, his bodily frame is breaking down, he can hardly bear the weight of it. He groans, being burdened. He would be "absent from the body and present with the Lord." As the weary would be at rest, as the exile longs for his own land, so he longs to be at home with Christ. But that yearning after Christ's presence is subordinate to his desire to please Him. "We labour, that, whether present or absent:" it was a secondary consideration with him whether he should be in the body or out of the body—under what conditions of being he might exist—in what world he might be when his Lord would come; his first thought, his grand aim, the labour of his life, was that he might be accepted of Him. We may not take this language as expressing what is true of the habitual and predominating aim and purpose

of those who furnish the general example of the Christian life. Great mischief has been done, especially in giving a character of unreality to Christian speech, by employing the words in which Scripture records the faith and saintliness of the Apostles or of the ideal Christian, as though they described the experiences and virtues of ordinary Christians. But whilst we may not take this language as asserting a fact in the experience of all Christians, we may take it as expressing an obligation which rests upon all alike.

We should all be labouring that we may be accepted of Him. It ought to be the desire and endeavour of our life to please Him, and so to be approved of Him when we appear before His judgment-seat.

We are met on this day to direct, and encourage, and stimulate each other in one great department of His service. I hope it will be felt to fall in with that purpose if I inquire into the reasons in the Christian mind which explain and require in the prosecution of Christ's work this supreme regard for His approval, and then observe on the influence which this regard for His approval is fitted to exert on us in our service for the advance-

ment of His truth and glory: (1) Respect for the recompense of the reward; (2) The desire to be right; (3) Personal affection for Christ. These are the things in the Christian mind which chiefly explain and demand a supreme regard for Christ's approval.

(1) Respect for the recompense of the reward. Christ's judgment upon our works will not be in word or form only, but in power. It may be in word, we are more sure that it will be in deed: that it will be declared by what He will do, in what we shall gain or lose by it.

There is so much gained or lost to His servants according as they succeed or fail in winning His approval, that they may well make it their solicitude and care to succeed in this. Is it fitting, it may be asked, that they should be serving Him with their eyes on the future rewards of His service? Not fitting indeed that they should be serving Him only, or chiefly, for the sake of those rewards, and this is what those who truly serve Him never do. But neither is it fitting that they should be serving Him without any thought and appreciation of them, or with so little thought and appreciation of them as we commonly observe. For we must conceive

of those rewards as consisting, in great part, of moral distinctions and possessions and enjoyments. The heavenly perfection will involve, in the case of all who rise to it, the same negative moral excellence, exemption in all alike from every taint of moral evil, but will admit of all degrees of positive moral excellence, and the rewards of their Lord will fix the degree of positive excellence in the moral acquisitions and experiences to which they will severally attain. He is coming to give to every one of them according as his work shall be, *i.e.* to give to them what will accord in mind as well as in degree with their work, moral rewards in proportion to the moral service. They will receive from Him "the things done in the body," bestowments corresponding in character as well as in measure with the things done, moral results to their moral deeds. The glory with which He will then make them shine in return for their righteous service will be most of all the splendour of their righteousness. The power with which He will clothe them, making rulers over many things those that have been faithful in a few things, will be, in its noblest form, power for holy and benevolent achievement; the joy with which He will specially

enrich their experience will be, in its highest blessedness, the joy of their moral nature. He who has no care to be distinguished hereafter by the exceeding lustre of his righteousness may reasonably question the strength, if he be sure of the genuineness, of his love for righteousness. He who has no care to be distinguished by the wide reach of his power for just and benevolent deeds, has reason to suspect the interest he now feels in works of justice and beneficence. He who has no care to be distinguished by the depths of his joy in his moral consciousness and action, has need to inquire into his present experience of the happiness of being and doing good. Indifference to distinctions having this moral character in them, and viewed under their moral aspect, is evidence, not of an unselfish nature, but rather of a nature insensible, or feebly sensible, to the attractions and worth of moral goodness.

Considered apart from the moral element which enters into the heavenly rewards, and regarded simply as they contribute to the exaltation and felicity of those who receive them, it is right and fitting that we should covet and labour for them. We are not, then, as it has been sometimes objected,

just extending the selfish aims of this life to an infinite and eternal sphere. We are selfish only when we seek our advantage so as to disregard some claims upon us of God or of our neighbour. We are but dealing righteously with ourselves, and thereby most effectually responding to all claims upon us, when we aspire after the honours and enjoyments with which the Divine Lord will reward His servants.

We are then, too, but conforming to God's purposes, as declared in the capacities and activities of our nature, and in the revelations of His Word. Why has He made us capable of those rewards? Why has He planted within us the love of honour, of power, and of happiness? Why do we find our highest and only complete satisfaction in them? Why has He shown to us in His Word that they are within our reach? Why has He set them before our eyes? Not, surely, that we may turn away our eyes from them, and count it unworthy of us, with our moral natures, to seek after them. Why should Christ have said so much of the recompense of His service — of the return which would be made for any, the least, thing done for Him—of the proportion be-

tween what He would give and what His servants had done? Why, just as the Apocalyptic vision was closing, and as He was withdrawing into silence and invisibility, should the assurance be among His last words, that He was coming again quickly, and His reward with Him, to give to every man according as his work should be? Why all this reiteration, and emphasis on the rewards of righteous work, but that He would fix our eyes on them, and kindle our desire for them, and stimulate and strengthen our purpose in the pursuit of them?

They are greatly mistaken who sometimes take to themselves credit for a self-denying and lowly spirit, because they take small account of those rewards. It will be enough, they say, to be safe within the heavenly gates. They are not ambitious of the distinctions of the place. The very lowest seat will satisfy them. They will be content if they are only there—anywhere there, anyhow there.

Let them not deceive themselves: that is not the true self-denial or Christian humility, but something very different from it, which allows them commonly to prize highly enough whatever may distinguish them above their fellow-men in

this world, while it encourages indifference to the distinctions of the heavenly world;—not true self-denial or humility which makes so little of what their Lord so magnifies; which cares not to receive what He has made it so greatly His care to give; what He has made the subject of His most glorious promises, and what He will bestow to the everlasting glory of His resources and munificence. It is not true self-denial or humility, but injustice to themselves and to their Lord. We all say, He wrongs his own soul who cares not for Christ's salvation. And do not they, in another measure, wrong their souls, and wrong Christ, who care little or nothing for the rewards in glory with which He would distinguish those whom He saves? Paul, after his Master, is the Church's chief pattern of self-renunciation and humility: "Not worthy to be called an apostle; less than the least of all saints." But though he lay low in the dust under a sense of his personal unworthiness, he confessed to a lofty ambition. The crown incorruptible in the gracious hand of his Master glistened before his eyes. He would win that prize; he would wear that crown. He was not content with the hope of *any* place or condition in the heavenly sphere;

he looked for "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," which his present suffering would work out, and which would be its recompense. It was not enough with him to be saved. He sounds a note of alarm when he refers to the possibility of Christ's servant being only himself saved. He would have his work, as well as his soul, pass safely through the last fiery ordeal, and be his "joy and crown of rejoicing." That ordeal as of fire, which will try our life's work as well as our souls, will be the Lord's judgment. So much of the work as can bear that fire, so much as will be approved of Him, will remain glorified, immortalised — glorifying, immortalising us. It surely cannot be a matter of indifference to us whether the work we are now doing will thus remain. We would not just be saved ourselves through the work which Christ has done for us, but have little or nothing hereafter to show for the work we are doing for Him. We would not leave His judgment-seat safe, but without the distinction from His hand which might have been ours. We would not be without the crown which He will place on the head of the faithful servant, not for our own sake, but for His sake, if only that we might cast it

again at His feet. We would not be content to miss for ever any glory, or power, or joy that He is willing and waiting to give; that contentment would not be Christian, or moral, or human. But if we would not for ever miss it, it is our great care now that our work be such as will bear the fiery assault, and be approved of Him.

(2) A supreme regard for Christ's approval of our Christian work, is explained and required by the desire to be right. We would be and do what is right for its own sake, because it is right, if we are true to our nature and to the Divine light in our souls. Righteousness itself, apart from all that flows from it, is a necessity of our renewed nature. They hunger and thirst after righteousness who share in the blessedness of the Christian character. But in proportion to our desire for the right will be our care for Christ's approval. All is right in our works that He approves. The right and the Christian are one. Righteousness is another name for Christ.

Christ is, in this sense, made unto us of God righteousness. That grand, invisible, spiritual reality, righteousness, became visible and audible in Christ. It takes form to itself in His action;

it finds voice for itself on His lips. We see it in His life; we hear it in His words. Those were all righteous deeds that He performed; those were all righteous judgments that He delivered. Who questions to-day whether He was right in the judgments which He passed on men and things? Who honours any name that was branded by Him? Who frowns upon any on whom He smiled? Whom He condemned, all the world condemns; whom He approved, all the world receives into its favour. Bad men agree with the good in praising those whom He praised, and denouncing those whom He denounced. He has carried with Him the universal conscience of mankind. "Heaven and earth shall pass away;" but no one dreams that there ever will be a reversion or modification of the judgments which He pronounced; that those whom He condemned will ever be approved, or those whom He approved will ever be condemned. It is felt that righteousness, which is unchangeable and everlasting as God's own nature, speaks by Him. And when this voice is once more heard, and in judgment on your work and mine, it will be to pronounce upon us the same irreversible judgment of right-

eousness. It is well if we are approved of our brethren; but it does not signify much, seeing that they so often approve the worthless. Better far if we are approved of our own conscience; but not enough. Conscience will often acquit the erring. "With me it is a very small thing to be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not myself." For I know "nothing by myself"—that is, against himself; "yet am I not thereby justified, but He that judgeth me is the Lord." He had his conscience on his side; but it did not follow that he was right. Its judgment might be reversed. "God is greater than our conscience, and He knoweth all things." Nothing is made sure and finally settled concerning the character of what we are doing till Christ speaks. We are right only when He is pleased. We are recovering the lost harmony of our life, with the everlasting law of righteousness and of God, in the measure that we are approved of Him. If that voice within us, which speaks for the right, has been understood by us in its deep, and awful, and glorious meaning; if we have learnt to reverence it as the voice of God within us; if it has come to be a necessity of our souls to be right—

a greater necessity than to be happy; if, born of God, we hunger after the right, and thirst after it as the water of life, we are content with no approving judgment but that of Christ. We are not satisfied with men's approval. We do not take for granted that we must be right because our consciences approve; we are inquiring and looking to Him. The only infallible evidence that we have of the Christian character is given by our labouring for the approving judgment of Christ.

(3) Personal affection for Christ is a third ground in the Christian mind for its supreme respect for that judgment.

We would please those whom we greatly love. No praises are as sweet as theirs. We can bear the frown of others if they only smile. We often care for no other compensation for toil, and pain, and suffering than their approval. The affectionate child who contends at school or college for some prize of youthful ambition, knows of no stimulant to his industry and exertion like that which he feels when he thinks what may be the joy one day of father and mother, brother and sister, on his account. When he has succeeded in the strife he

is not moved by the commendation of his teachers, or the plaudits of his companions, as he is by what he knows will be thought, and felt, and said at home. The man who has won renown by his service to his country and to mankind, has often confessed that no honours he has received have so recompensed his heart for what he had achieved, as the greetings which welcomed him in the little town or village where he was born and reared. He has felt that the delight in his triumph of those who were dear to him through old memories and associations, or even that the joy he has given to one heart, the exulting smile on one face, the approving glad words that fell from one tongue, were worth more to him than all acclamations and gifts besides. It is of the nature of true love thus to prize the joy and approval of its object. But there is no love truer, or so great as that which Christ can inspire. He is loved by those who appreciate His claims on their faith and affections as God is loved by them. He is to them God—"God manifest in the flesh." They not only believe in the insoluble mystery of God's presence in Him, but they see God manifested in Him. It is His character in God which inspires their love, but that is God's

character which they behold in Christ. That is God's own purity and justice and love; not something like their perfection in God, but the very same, the very beauty which they see in Him.

They can think of nothing more beautiful in God's character than that which they see in Him, or anything that is good or beautiful at all in God which they do not see in Him. There is nothing which has any power to touch their hearts in their conception of the infinite and eternal Spirit which they do not see embodied and humanised in the nature and life of Christ. They love Him as they love God, and with all the love, too, they can give to man. They see in Him not only a man who excels all other men, but one in whom all the excellencies found in separate and imperfect forms throughout the human race, all excellencies possible or conceivable in man, meet in their essential perfection. There is the strength of manhood, the tenderness of womanhood, the purity of childhood. There is no virtue that can ennoble, no grace that can adorn our nature, nothing great or good, nothing strong or gentle or holy, in the perfect ideal of humanity, which in its essential beauty and worth they do not see in Him.

There is nothing to love in man, as there is nothing to love in God, which they do not see in the face of Christ.

And He is, withal, their Saviour, who loved them with a love passing knowledge, and who gave Himself for them; who has delivered them from wrath and from sin, and who has raised them into fellowship of spirit and character, and work and destiny, with Himself. There is no love like theirs who appreciate His claims on their hearts. And Paul could appreciate them, and his devotion knew no limit. The things that were gain to him he counted loss for His sake; losses for His sake were gains. Toil for Him was pleasure; reproach for His name was honour. It was joy to suffer for Him; it was sweet to die for Him; life was not worth having without Him. He could bear no life apart from Him. "To me to live is Christ." Christ was the principle, the law, the spirit, the end. Christ was, as it were, the atmosphere, the very element of his life. He was in Christ, and Christ lived in him. Love had achieved in him its last result—uniting him in the deepest consciousness of his being with its object, making him and Christ *one*. *Christ was his life*. And when he looked to the world

that comes after this life, there, too, he was equally inseparable from Christ. To his faith and hope Christ lit up and glorified the infinite and everlasting future. Christ filled it: it was as if there was nothing and no one there but Christ. To die was to depart and to be with Christ. Heaven and eternity signified to him being for ever with the Lord. If love finds its highest satisfaction in the pleasure and approval of its object, how must he have desired to please Christ. We can understand how he came to say, "With me it is a very small thing to be judged of you, or of man's judgment." What could it matter though the work he was doing might be disparaged and despised, though all men should scorn and hiss him, if only his Lord was pleased? How poor would be all that this world could give him, how dull and empty would be its loudest praises, compared with one word of praise from the lips of Him whom he so loved and adored.

We, too, in our Christian work regard nothing so highly as that, if there is nothing and no one we so much love as Christ. Our desire to please Him determines the reality and strength of our love to Him. When there is a little thought sometimes or

often of His pleasure and approbation, and a great deal habitually thought of our own pleasure and position,—a little thought of what He will do and say, a great deal of what men will do and say,—our love to Him may be true, but it must be small. Where the love is true and strong, where He is Lord of the affections, the ambition and the labour are to be accepted of Him.

Thus, in proportion to our aspirations after the glory which is eternal, to our desire and endeavour to be right, to our love to the all-glorious Lord, do we labour to be approved of Him.

This may be further urged on the ground of the influence it can hardly fail to exercise on us, in our prosecution of Christ's work. How may it be expected to affect us in our service for the extension of His truth and glory?

(1) It will quicken inquiry into the motive of our service. We must know how much His approval will depend on the motive which rules our action. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ: not appear there only by our personal presence, but by the revelation of what is hidden in our motives and thoughts, actions and aims. We must be manifested before the judgment-seat of

Christ. The principle of our action will appear, and will be the primary element in the character of it, as it will pass under His judgment. The Lord looketh on the heart, and will approve or condemn, according to its desires and purposes.

This is for our consolation when we try, with a pure aim, to serve Him, and fail. Our work has failed, and yet we have succeeded. It will be to us, in His judgment, the same as though our work had succeeded. Multitudes who strive and fail in the conflict with the evil around them will yet be hailed and crowned by Him as conquerors. It is for the consolation of those who have it in their will to do what they have not the power even to attempt.

Their hearts are enlarged, their aspirations are lofty, they would do great things if they could; but their faculty is small, their means are narrow, their sphere is circumscribed. There is little or nothing they can do. They are of no account in the judgment of men, but they shall be of great account in Christ's judgment. It will be as though they had done all they would do. Thus they shall suffer nothing in His judgment because they lacked opportunity or power.

There are men who have it in their hearts to give munificently, but they are poor, and can give nothing. It will be to them, in their Lord's reckoning, as though they had given; they will find their place at last among the munificent givers. There are those who would spend their lives in heathen lands, rejoicing in the missionary's glorious toils and privations and sacrifices; but they have no capacity for the enterprise, or they are bound down to the small duties of a commonplace life at home by inexorable circumstances. It will be to them as though they had left their homes behind, and lived and laboured all their days in strange lands, for the love of Christ and of the heathen. There are many who would die for Christ's truth, if there were no alternative left them but to die for it or deny it. It is in them to make the martyr's sacrifice. It does not however appear. They are called to no heroic deeds. But it will appear. They will appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. They who have the martyr's spirit in them, and want nothing but the martyr's opportunity, shall wear the martyr's crown. Inasmuch as it was in their hearts, He will accept the sacrifice as though it were a fact in their life. We should not com-

plain or regret on our own account, if we are denied the capacity and the means of doing the work that we would. We shall be none the lower in His approval for that denial. He will take the will for the deed. If it be our great care to be approved of Him, if we are more concerned for our disposition than for our ability, we are looking inwardly, anxious to know whether it be in our heart to do for Him what lies beyond our power.

It is for our warning when we are engaged in His work, as well as for our consolation when we are disabled from it, that His approving judgment is determined by the purpose of the heart.

Only so much of our service as commends itself by the motive with which it is done, will be accepted of Him. What a diminution there will be in the amount of our life's work in His cause as it will reappear before His approving judgment! How much will have been taken from it! How much that appears now as our work will be wanting there! All that is done of it merely to satisfy a restless nature, because we must be doing something, will be wanting there. All that is done through the constraint of habit, and under the influence of the prevailing opinion and example, because

it is easier to go with the stream than to go against it, or stand still in the midst of it, will be wanting there. All that is done to meet the exigencies of our profession, or of our external circumstances, because we must do it or suffer in our present position or comfort, will be wanting there. All that is done to gratify a poor ambition, because we would be seen and heard and praised of men, will be wanting there. When so much will have been taken away from it, how much will there be left? Nothing, indeed, that is done from the true Christian motive will be found wanting then, because it is mixed up with so much that springs from another source. The righteous and merciful Lord will not reject the grain of gold because it is imbedded in much dross. But it is only the gold that He will accept; only so much as we do from the pure motive will be there. Ah, how much will be wanting! How the work which now seems little enough will be further diminished! How the work that we do in life, and that sometimes swells now into considerable magnitude before the eyes of our brethren, and perhaps before our own eyes, will be reduced! What a change of places there will be among the workers! the last first and the first last.

There are those who are labouring in obscurity who will then become conspicuous. There are those who are to-day in the high places of the field who will then go out of sight. "There are last who shall be first, and there are first who shall be last."

If we are deeply concerned that what we are doing for Christ should be found at last accepted of Him, we are looking much within, and seeking to know what it is that moves us to do it. The spirit and circumstances of the time are unfavourable to this introspection. It is a day of busy and tumultuous action. Life is given more than it used to be to external things. The religious life is more occupied with forms and organisations and practical activities. Far more is thought of what is seen than of what is not seen—what is done than of the spirit and motive in which it originates. There is so much to be done for Christ and the world, and so much required before it can be done, that if we only help to do it, those who appeal to us, thinking more of their cause than of us, will not stop to inquire or generally care much for the reason why we give and labour. There is much danger lest we should not care much for it ourselves.

Here and there you meet a man who is too much given to self-inspection—who indulges in a morbid analysis of his motives; but for every one who errs in that direction, there are scores who err through the neglect of that self-scrutiny. We shall be saved from this grave and common error, if we care much for the judgment on our service of Him who looketh on the heart. If we value greatly His approval we shall find time in this busy and noisy age, when the Christian life is so occupied with external things, to look within, and to question our own hearts. Why do I preach those sermons, upon those subjects, and after that manner? Why do I make those speeches, giving to them that particular form and character? Why am I so anxious about them? Who am I thinking about in the study and in the pulpit? What am I aiming at? Why do I enter those houses, and speak in that language and tone to the sick and the sorrowing, or to those who expect religious words from me? Why did I give that money to Christ's cause? Why do I attend those meetings? Why do I serve this missionary and other kindred institutions? Why do I do this work for the diffusion of the knowledge of Christ?

He knows why, and it will come out in the ex-

pression of His judgment on our work. And we may now know why, if we but look within, and honestly inquire; and we shall want and seek to know, if our great solicitude is that our work may be approved of Him.

(2) This will quicken our inquiry into the extent as well as into the motive of our service. We shall not be satisfied with doing and giving as much as our brethren, or as much as they expect from us. We shall be inquiring (having respect to Christ's judgment upon us) whether we are doing and giving what accords with our ability and opportunity, and the necessities of His cause as they appeal to us. We shall require to know what self-denial His service costs us—what sacrifice we make for it.

There are too many, indeed, who seem to think that the time for self-denial and sacrifice is past. Our lives, they are ready to say, have fallen to us in pleasant places; we have a goodly heritage. Our forefathers served Christ and truth at an immense cost to themselves: they made sacrifices. We reap the fruit of their labour and suffering in our security and liberty, and in the ease and enjoyment of our religious life. Thanks

be to them, we have no hard duties to perform, no sacrifice to make for Christ and His gospel.

What, not in London, with its millions of souls living in practical heathenism! Not in the present day, when the whole heathen world is known and accessible to us, and open to our influence as it never was before, and because more known, and accessible, and open to our influence, therefore crying out to us for help, and appealing to our pity as it never did before! No hard duty now imposed on us, no sacrifice required of us! Where this is not said or consciously thought, it appears to be a widely dominant impression. There are those in Christian communities—more, no doubt, than appear—who reach, in the service they render Christ's cause, the point of self-denial and self-sacrifice. But no one would believe us if we said that the bulk of those who bear the Christian name deny themselves, or sacrifice anything for the spread of the knowledge of Christ and the salvation of their fellow-men. Who does not often think that he must look for some other test of the true Christian character by which to try his neighbours than that which is furnished by the extent of self-denial and self-sacrifice for Christ and for the world?

Many of us have felt with the distinguished preacher whose biography has lately awakened so deep and general an interest, when he said in one of his letters, after referring to what the professedly Christian men around him spent on themselves as compared with what they spent on their fellow-men: "I am tempted sometimes to resolve I will never again suffer the word self-sacrifice to pass my lips, which now so often and so smoothly runs from them." The word, however, must continue to pass our lips. We must preach self-sacrifice, even though we may practise it little. The minister must not preach only what he practises. He is not in this way to preach himself. An irksome task he will find it to preach self-sacrifice, if he should be thinking how little of it there is in his own life, and suspecting that those of his familiar acquaintances and close observers are wondering, as they listen, what the self-sacrificing acts may be which he is performing in the interests of Christ and of His truth in the world; and irksome, too, it will be if he should be thinking how unwelcome it will be to many who hear him; how much they had rather hear of Christ's sacrifice for them than of their sacrifice for Him; how remote it is from their spirit

and life; how some of them are not unlikely to be inwardly smiling at the contradiction between what he urges and what they see to be the common practice of the Church.

He must preach it notwithstanding, or he cannot be preaching Christ: not Christ on the cross, for that is the meaning and glory of His cross; not Christ on the throne, for that is what He requires on His throne of glory and judgment. What can please Him, what can He approve of, like self-denial and self-sacrifice in the same cause for which He so denied and sacrificed Himself? What a limitation there must be of His approval if that be wanting! How can we hope for His approval if there be little or nothing of this in our service of Him? If we serve Him only when we can at the same time serve ourselves, or can do it at no real cost to ourselves; if we speak for Him and His truth when it is pleasant and profitable, or at least safe, but say nothing when by speaking we may suffer or lose, or be in danger of losing something for which we care; if we go and do the work that falls in with our inclinations, but leave others to do or leave undone the necessary work that we do not like; if we give a portion of our

time to the promotion of His cause, but no portion of it that is wanted for our worldly gain and personal enjoyments; if we give our money, but so little in the course of a year that we do not care to reckon it up at the end of the year, so little compared with what we spend upon the ornaments and luxuries of life, that we shall rather not put the two amounts side by side, so little that it can make no appreciable impression on our accumulation or expenditure; if we serve Him, but deny ourselves nothing, sacrifice nothing that we really value when the exigencies of His cause demand self-denial and self-sacrifice—can we hope to be approved of Him who, being in the form of God, emptied Himself for that cause, lived a life all through of self-denial for it, and then offered Himself a sacrifice for it? We can be at no loss to know what kinds of service it is that He will approve. How will it be when we, who make no self-sacrifice for Him, appear before His judgment-seat?

What will become of us? He is very merciful, and will forgive. Yes, He will forgive, but forgiveness is not approval. He may look on us as He did on Peter, in merciful silence, but He will not approve. He will make all merciful allowance for

our infirmities and temptations—He will not approve. He will not say, "Well done, good and faithful servant:" He will not say that word of us if there is no self-sacrifice in His cause. That is impossible; it would not be true. We shall not hear that word from His lips. The fame for eternity which that word will give will not be ours. The joy which will endure for ever of the remembrance of it will not be ours.

How many are there of His servants in our Churches who, when the judgment will be on their service for the extension of His reign and glory in the world, will miss that word! They will be forgiven, but not approved. We may well be asking, each one of his own work—Wherein have I denied myself? What sacrifice have I made in that service? How much have I suffered in sorrow and grief for the sin and misery of the world? What hard things have I done in my life, or am doing now, for its deliverance? What does it cost me? I have spent so much time, thought, anxiety, money, labour upon my reputation, and position, and enjoyment in life; these have cost me so much self-denial and self-sacrifice: how much has the salvation of the world cost me? How

much have I given up which I might have kept, and should have kept, but for my desire that men might be saved? What cross have I taken up in the cause for which Christ was nailed to His cross? There is a cross which I am compelled to carry: where is the cross which I have chosen to carry? We may be expected to urge this inquiry until the answer takes a settled and definite form before our minds, if we are bent on winning Christ's approval.

(3) That respect for His approval will have its further influence in determining the form and manner of our service in the interests of His kingdom and glory. We have often no little difficulty in determining what that form and manner shall be. Should we give our life to the ministry in heathen lands or in this Christian land? Should we give our life to the ministry at all? Should we contribute to the propagation of His truth under the circumstances in which the appeal is made to us? In what way should we give? What should be the proportion between what we give for this, and what we give for other objects, and what we keep for ourselves? What measure shall we adopt under these conditions in which we are called to act? What course shall we take when we have two or

three courses open to us? We are perplexed by such questions which are ever recurring. And the perplexity will often arise from difficulties inseparable from our circumstances, but frequently—more frequently, we think—from the want of a permanent regard for Christ's pleasure. We do think of what is pleasing to Him, but we think also about as much, probably more, of what is pleasing to men, or of what is pleasing and profitable to ourselves. The question of the forms and direction which our action shall take becomes complicated. The eye is not single, but double or treble, so we are confused and hesitate, doubt and discuss, and find it difficult to conclude what we had better do, or how we had better do it. How it would, in numberless instances, lighten before us the path we should take; how it would shorten the wearisome discussions of many a committee-room, if the anxiety and aim were simply to know and do what was pleasing to Christ. If the eye were single, the whole body would be full of light. And how changed from what it now often is, and improved, under that guiding influence, would be the form and method of the service we should render Christ and His truth. When we would serve Him by speaking of

Him, from how many evils, too common among us, would our speech be free if we made it our serious care to speak in the way in which we see He would approve. If we were speaking, for example, of His love, we could never do it in a light, unthinking, unsympathising spirit and tone, for we should know that could not possibly please Him. It would offend any man to hear the love which he felt for another, and which had become sacred in his eyes, through the purity, and depth, and tenderness, and sacrifices of it, made the subject of a heedless common talk. And must it not offend Christ to hear us talk to men of His boundless and sacred love to them as of some familiar thing, in heartless, unappreciating tones and words? If we were striving to please Him we should speak of His love as of something most sacred, which had not yet ceased to impress us with wonder, and reverence, and delight. If we were speaking of His sufferings for sin, it would not be with ease and freedom, as though the mystery of them was solved to us, and we had seen into their depths and could explain their nature. We should not make free in our discourse with His pains and sorrows, His agony and blood. These would not be themes

on which we should attempt eloquent descriptions, or aim at rhetorical effects. For we should be sure that could not please Him who knows what it was He suffered, and how awful and terrible it was. You would be cautious how you spoke in the presence of a great human sufferer, of what he had passed through; you would feel that he could not bear light words or fine passages about it. Seeking the approval of the greatest Sufferer, we should never try to be fine on what He passed through in the garden, and on the cross. Our speech would be solemn and restrained; there would be a reserve in it. There would be no reserve in the fact of His death for our sin and for our redemption, but a certain reverential reserve in speaking of the nameless woe. Or, if we were speaking to men in His name, repeating to them the gracious invitations which first fell from His own lips, we should not do it with coldness or indifference, as though we could quite bear to take a refusal, for that we should know could not possibly please Him. We should be very earnest—importunate; we should press and beseech them to come, as we valued His approval. Or, if we were speaking to them of what would follow their refusal and ultimate rejec-

tion of Him, warning them of the doom of suffering, and mysterious perdition which threatened them, we should not say less about it than He did, or more about it than He did. We should not go into details which were conjectural and imaginary, as though it gave us some satisfaction to dwell and enlarge upon it; we should not speak of it in harsh or severe, boisterous and violent tones; that we should be sure could not please Him. He spoke with tears of the doom of the disobedient. He would gather them, He said, under His wing, and shelter them from the storm He foretold. If it were our care to speak as He approved, we could only do it with something of His own tenderness, and mournfulness, and lamentation. It would in these, as in many other instances, work a change for the better in the form, and temper, and method of our speech, if we would try to speak as He would approve. It would cure us of many affectations, and correct many extravagancies. It would chasten our rhetoric, it would purify our taste, it would give grace and force to our words.

And when we would serve Him by the gifts and labour of our hands, a primary respect for Christ's

judgment would not less determine the way in which we should do it.

We should give cheerfully and with a liberal hand; we should give and not talk about it, and not stoop to any contrivance that others might know and talk about it. We should labour, and not by any publicity, or bustle, or noise draw more attention to it than we could help. There would be no paragraphs in the papers originating with us which reported our work, unless in some exceptional cases, when it was Christ's glory, not our own, that required it. We should know that we could not please Him by a method of serving Him which would invite, even demand, the attention and court the praise of men. It was not in that way that He served His cause. When He spoke the words which He knew would be repeated for ever; when He worked the wonderful works of God among men; when He was seeking the deliverance of the world from the burden of sin and suffering, He did not strive, nor cry, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets. If it were our first desire to please Him, our action in His service would be earnest, often laborious, but quiet, unobtrusive, silent, powerful, beautiful! It would thus affect us

in every way, and to the greatest advantage to ourselves and to our service of Christ and the Gospel. It would purify and elevate the spirit and motive of our service, enlarge the measure of it, and give power and beauty to the form and manner of it.

Is not this, more than anything else, what our Churches in the present day need, in respect to their service of this missionary cause,—a true sense of the account which they must give to their Lord, and a corresponding solicitude for His approving judgment? Is it not too much, in the representation made to Christian men, as though, through their faith in Christ, the future judgment would be to them formal rather than real? Is it not in what Christians hear as though, leaning only on Christ, they had nothing very seriously to anticipate in that process of trial through which they must pass? It is not always set before them as it stood before Paul's mind, a real trial of their work, with real consequences following from it.

The cross, indeed, should by no minister be less exalted than it is, but even the cross should not be exalted so as to hide the judgment-seat. And when this is done, is there always as much said as there should be to Christian men of Christ's

coming again, and to judge them? The subject is one on which warning words are often addressed to the impenitent and disobedient. Is it not treated too much as though its chief use was to furnish ground for alarming and awakening appeals to them? Is it made sufficiently the theme of discourse to the believing? It is the subject on which Christ was ever speaking to the disciples. There is nothing more prominent than this in the writings of the Apostles to their fellow-believers. There is not more said to Christ's disciples of His cross than there is of His judgment-seat. Is it always so now? Does the coming again of Christ to judge those who believe on Him occupy the same place in relation to other truths as it did in the ministration of the Master Himself and His Apostles? Should we not be meeting the most urgent need of a great many Christians, if we could make the judgment-seat as real and visible as the cross of Christ, and could awaken within them a care to be approved before that judgment-seat, like that which we would have them feel for their safety beneath the cross? With a care like that pervading our Churches, there will be no lack of men to go and preach to the heathen, or of resources from which

they could be sustained. Is not this what we ourselves individually most need in connection with our action for the spread of the knowledge of Christ through the world? Be it our endeavour to get oftener now face to face with Christ our Judge, as well as our Saviour. Be it our habit to look forward to the judgment which He will pronounce on us and on our work. We need not look so far on in the future as we are apt to do. We put the judgment-seat at so great a distance from us that we cannot distinctly see it. It seems hardly real. But it may not be thus far from us.

It may be long before He comes in the clouds, and all nations are gathered before Him; it cannot be long before we receive His judgment upon us. The Judge is at the door; "absent from the body, present with the Lord,"—and we shall not be many moments with Him before we know and feel His judgment on our service. The light of that presence will make clear what our work has been. Have we not often observed, as men leaving this world were drawing near to Him, how light was breaking in upon them about the past? "Many things," said a great man once, when he was dying, "are growing plain and clear to me."

That is, in effect, often said: many, as the end is approaching, have seen their character and life as they never saw them before. The evil they have done assumes a new and darker form in their eyes. The opportunities for Christ's service, little prized at the time, have become all golden, precious beyond calculation. The duties which they imperfectly performed, thinking little of them, or which they quite neglected, never looked so great and solemn. If those opportunities were repeated, if those duties were again to be performed, if life were to be had over again, all would be very different. Whence this new knowledge of themselves? Whence this self-revealing light? Does it come from death? No, from something, and some one, the other side of death. They feel they are drawing near Christ the Judge. The nearer they come to Him, the more they learn the truth concerning themselves. When we are present with the Lord we shall know all the truth, which will be to know His judgment concerning ourselves. We have not to wait long for His judgment; we have not to look far onward to the judgment-seat. The Judge is at the door. Let us labour that we may be accepted of Him.

When we are called, as at this time, to serve Him, may it be our great question what, and how much is it, that will be pleasing to Him. When we have served Him by word or gift or labour, may it be our satisfaction to be able to think that we have done as He would approve. When our life's service is over, may it be our blessedness to hear Him, say "Well done good and faithful servants."

"CONSIDER HIM."

HEBREWS xii. 3.

"Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

"CONSIDER Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself,"—the contradiction stated in the words preceding, which we read and understand as follows: "Looking unto Jesus, the author"—rather the "leader" and "finisher" or "perfecter," not of *our* faith, which is only in our version, but *of faith*—the faith which it has been the purpose of the whole chapter preceding this to enforce and illustrate. "Looking unto Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith." The entire connection before, and after, points to the conclusion that Christ's pre-eminence in faith, His perfect example of it, is intended, and is probably the primary, if not the only thing, here intended.

* Preached to the Congregational Union, at Manchester.

The writer has summoned up before the eyes of the believing Hebrews the most distinguished for their faith through all the past ages, and he would have them look to them for their guidance and inspiration, but look yet more to Jesus, the chief and leader of all in that illustrious line, the one in whom the faith they had exemplified reached its last perfection; and as he has taken the points in the history of those whom he has named in which their faith was most conspicuous, so he takes the point in His history in which His faith shone brightest. "Looking unto Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before Him,"—instead of the joy of this life, which lay within His reach, and which He was tempted to appropriate—or more probably, as it has been commonly understood, for the sake of the joy which was set before Him as the result and reward of His obedience and suffering—"endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God." There was the crowning instance of His faith, there it passed through its severest trial and achieved its greatest triumph, when for the sake of that joy which was all invisible and future, He endured the cross and despised the shame.

We speak of faith *in* Christ, not so often of the faith *of* Christ. He is the object of faith, not very much, I think, with us, the example of faith.

But this is what we find in this place and elsewhere in this Epistle, as in the second chapter, when the Old Testament words, "I will put my trust in Him," are quoted as Christ's own words. He is made to say, "I will put My trust in Him." And we must recognise His faith, for how can we hold that He became subject to the limitations of our humanity if faith was not a necessity to Him; and how can we maintain that His example of human character and life was complete and all-sufficient for us, if it was not a perfect example of faith; and how can we look to Him as able to feel for us, and succour us, because He was tried as we are, if He was not tried in His faith?

It is of the first importance that we should not allow our belief in His mysterious relation and union to the Godhead, or any apparent logical exigency arising out of the belief, to dim our apprehension of the reality of His human nature and human experience. We must look to Him who was the Son of God, partaker of the Divine nature, as very man, who had to live by faith as we have,

whose faith was tried like ours and more than ours, tried to the last extremity, when men took Him and crucified Him.

"Consider Him," the writer adds, "that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds." Consider, that is, by comparison of His case with your own. It is such consideration that the word here employed denotes, and that is required by what immediately follows: "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Compare His case with your own.

The strife in the ancient shows, to which reference seems to be made, became most formidable and desperate when the blood of the combatants began to flow. The spiritual strife had not reached its last severity in the experience of these Hebrews as it had in Christ's; it had not become with them, figuratively or literally, a bloody strife. He had to resist literally unto blood. They suffered less in the strife to which they were called, against sin in themselves and in their persecutors, and yet they were disposed to yield, because of what they suffered. The battle seemed going against them; they were weary and faint in their minds, and were

tempted to surrender to the adversary. What is here said of Christ's example of faith to inspire them anew for the strife, may be fitly addressed to us also in some of our experiences in our Christian work.

All real work is a strife. Christian work is a strife against sin. It is a strife, indeed, against ignorance and falsehood and suffering, but most of all against sin, and against those other evils chiefly as they are the instruments and auxiliaries of sin. We have to strive against sin not only as it may tempt us, or as it may express itself in direct hostility to us personally, but as it exists in the world around. That is our work as Christ's servants. It owes its deepest meaning and interest, its highest dignity and glory, to its being a strife against sin. As there is no evil so mighty and terrible as sin, so there is no work so great and grand as the strife against it. It should be our care in the work we do in Christ's name, that our strife be not against men but against sin; not for a party, a sect, a church, not for our own gain, or position, or power, or glory, essentially and pre-eminently, but for righteousness and against sin. We do well to stop at intervals in the midst of our

work, to inquire and make sure what it is we are really striving for, and really striving against, and to make sure, too, that we have the obvious and indispensable qualification for Christian work, considered as a strife against sin, which consists in personal renunciation of it, and in real and deep hostility to it.

There have been soldiers in this world's battles who were bound by secret league or favour to those against whom they fought. Those who were opposed to them in the field were not their enemies, and therefore suffered little or nothing, but rather gained at their hands. There have been such soldiers, and in much greater numbers, in the Christian service—soldiers taking part outwardly in the great strife against sin, while in their secret practice they have not forsaken it, and in their hearts have not renounced it. It was not for them to win success or honour in the strife.

You must have done with all secret, as well as open service, and love of sin, or the strife against it in your work will be very unreal, weak, and ineffectual,—will beget within self-contempt, and end sooner or later, here or hereafter, in open disgrace. He who would fight for righteousness against sin,

must be loyal to righteousness, must be against sin, in secret, and in heart. Christ's holy work must be done with clean hands.

It is, then, an arduous work. It could be no other, seeing it is a strife against the sin in the world. It was so to Christ's own experience. It has been so in the experience of all His servants. Who of us, serving Christ and His truth, has not felt exhausted and disheartened by the difficulties and hindrances and opposition we have met? It is not on occasions like this that we feel it, when we are gathered together for mutual sympathy and conference. The presence of large numbers, and the utterances of the strong and prosperous, reassure and inspire us; we look hopefully and boldly on our work and the future. The soldier has no misgivings on parade, he fears no foe on the great review days. But in the comparative retirement of our respective fields of labour and conflict, face to face with all that is against us, and all that is required of us, we are, most of us, at times weary and faint in our minds. The power that is against us is too strong, the work required is too much.

The cause of righteousness in the world, which we would serve, does not seem to advance, or not to

advance in our hands, or does not seem likely to advance, or it does not seem worth all the labour and sacrifice it demands. We relax our efforts for it; we are tempted, not to give up Christ as these Hebrews were, but to give up Christ's service by withdrawing from the work for it on which we had entered, and we think sometimes we should do it, but for the pressure and restraint of circumstances. We are weary and faint. Our faith in our cause is tried, and it ill bears the trial. At such a time the language of the text is of special use and force in its application to us. It directs us, when our hands are drooping and our faith is weak and failing in the cause of righteousness, to the example of Christ's faith in that cause. It bids us compare His case with our own, look at the trial and triumph of His faith when He stood before the cross and the shame, and to consider how much less, how very small in comparison, is the trial of our faith. I have thought it might help some of us if I spoke of some of the things which contributed to the trial of His faith in the closing hour of His life, from which it appears how much greater the trial of His faith was than ours is in the work, the strife, in which, in common with Him, we are engaged.

I shall observe on three things which, in the last and great hour, contributed to the trial of His faith: I. The denial to Him of human sympathy and co-operation; II. The apparent failure of the ministry of His life; III. The depth of His final humiliation and suffering.

I. I name first the denial to Him of human sympathy and co-operation. We know how men are sustained in their beliefs and practices by the example of the same beliefs and practices in others; how many there are who believe and do things, mainly because the party or Church to which they belong believe and do them. They could not believe them or do them if they were not believed or done by their party or Church. And where the dependence on the faith and life of others is not thus entire and absolute, it is found to exist to a large extent. We all believe more strongly and act more confidently, in most cases, because others believe and act with us.

God intended that it should be so; that our faith, even, in Him should be assisted by the faith we see others put in Him, and that our strength for the work which He assigns to us should largely come from the co-operation of our fellow-men. How

hard it would be to believe in Him, if there was no one else who believed in Him, or to believe in anything that was doubted or denied by everyone but ourselves. How hard to live and labour on in a cause, and for a purpose from which all the world beside stood aloof. Imagine any one of us thus forsaken, isolated, no one soul sharing his convictions, or in sympathy with him or his purpose, no hand but his own in the work to which he had given his life. Who has the faith that could stand that test? That was the ordeal through which the faith of Jesus passed. He cared for human sympathy. He could not otherwise have had the perfect nature of a man—not the heart of a loving man. "The hour cometh," He said, "yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every one to his own, and shall leave Me alone." "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" We cannot mistake the sadness of tone, the sense of privation in the words. He felt the need of human sympathy in His purposes, work, and suffering. He desired it, sought for it. It would have soothed Him, strengthened Him, satisfied Him, as water did when He was thirsty, and bread when He was hungry. But He did not get it, not in that hour

when He most needed it. The world knew Him not, and could have no sympathy with Him, and the few on whom the light had partially broken in, but narrowly, and dimly, and confusedly apprehended His purpose and work. He could tell them but very little of what He knew, felt, and intended; they could not enter into His thought and feeling. And even such sympathy as they could give by their presence and personal devotion, was withdrawn from Him in that hour of supreme trial: they left Him alone. There is no one there to feel for Him, no one anywhere who understands Him and His purpose, no one who will join Him in the way He took for the accomplishment of it. The work He is prosecuting is one for human co-operation. Ten thousand human hands are required for it, and His hand alone is engaged in it. He has to bear Himself the whole burden of His cause. The strife against the whole world's sin is one for a great army, and He is left alone in the field. But He is not weary or faint in His mind. His faith in His cause, which is His faith in God, does not fail Him: "I am not alone, for the Father is with Me."

When our steps falter and our hands hang down,

we should consider Him, and the very different conditions in respect to human sympathy and co-operation under which we are called to serve the same cause with Him. In our labour for Christ's truth in its essential elements, how many are there all over Christian lands who think and feel as we do, who share in our desires and purposes, and work for our ends. We look abroad from the little spot in the field where we are placed, and see that we belong to a vast army. We have the faith of all that compose it, in God and the cause of the Gospel, to support our faith, and their action to inspire our courage and strengthen our hands. Jesus looked abroad over that same world-wide field of conflict; there was no army there to support Him, no one on His side and the Gospel's, and His faith was nothing the less because He was alone in the face of the foe.

In our labour for our distinctive principles as a section of God's Church—principles of truth and righteousness as we believe them to be, which, though not vital to the Gospel, are most important to it—we have the strength provided for us that arises from the number who believe in, and acknowledge, those principles, and who unite with us

in their maintenance and diffusion. It is an obvious use of this union of our Churches, and of a large gathering like the present of the representatives of our Churches, that it brings home to us the fact, by making it visible and palpable, that there is a great multitude of godly men to whom all that is peculiar to ourselves in our doctrine and practice is dear and sacred. Here, too, we see quite an army on our side, striving for all we hold to be truth and righteousness. And we find ourselves this week in the midst of a crowd which represents thousands and tens of thousands who share our convictions and aims. We have the faith and action of all these thousands to help our faith and action: Jesus had to maintain His strife with no such support to His faith and action. And He would give up nothing that was true and right, though He saw that He must stand by it alone; He did not believe in it, or love it, or work for it the less, though He saw all but Himself were ignorant of it, or indifferent to it, or afraid of it, or ashamed of it; He would not give it up. In our labour for the Gospel, and for our distinctive principles and convictions as a Christian body, we have not only sympathy with our cause, and co-operation in the

general defence and furtherance of it, but sympathy with ourselves personally, and co-operation in the particular service of our respective spheres. We have not, probably, all the sympathy we desire and need, and have a right to expect. We miss a good many who should, we think, be helping us in council and action. There are men of intelligence who will not give us of their light; there are rich men who will give us of their substance, but they take no interest in us or in our work, or they love their ease and their pleasure, or their business and its gains, more than they do the Master's work as it lies at their door and ours. But, on the other hand, there are some, and with many of us not a few, who watch with interest our aims and endeavours; who speak to us in kindly and encouraging tones; who pray for us, and who work with us. In that corner of the field where we are appointed to serve, we are far from being tried by the same loneliness as the Master.

If we *should* be yet feeling that our trial lies in this direction, we should be concerned to know that the reason for this imperfect help, and limited sympathy we receive, lies not in us rather than in our work. It may be there is something in our temper, or

spirit, or manner, or character, that alienates hearts that would feel for us. It may be that it is not easy or pleasant to work with us. In any such case we should humble and reproach ourselves, and repent, but not lose faith in our cause, because we are left too much to ourselves. If, however, we are disheartened, weary, and faint in our minds, because, through no fault that we can see of our own, there are too few who give us their sympathy and join their hands with ours, or because the sympathy we receive, and the action that is united to ours, is not of a kind to save us from the sense of loneliness, then it is for us to remember that we have partnership with the Lord in our trial, and to compare His case with our own; to consider how much heavier was that trial as it fell upon Him, and how He bore it. We have too little sympathy and help from men in our work, and it tries and shakes our faith in God's sympathy and help; but He was left all alone of men in that last hour—in that last hour when He felt the most the awful weight of His life's work—when the strife became hottest, most furious, deadly, literally a "bloody strife." He looked, and there was none to help: "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?"

He wondered there was none to uphold; He felt His desolation, but His faith prevailed: "I am not alone." The Father was with Him.

II. The apparent failure of the ministry of His life contributed to the trial of His faith. It *was* no failure indeed, but from all that appears, now that His ministry and life are closing, it has failed. "Who hath believed his report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" He has made no impression but a hostile one on the priests, scribes, rulers, the leaders of the people—on the Pharisees, Sadducees, the sects of the day. For a while He found acceptance with the multitude: "the common people heard Him gladly." But the impression on them was not deep or lasting. He has heard the people cry out, "Crucify Him!" For what end that appears has He spoken so much, and taught so many things, and lived that life among men? Where is there faith in His doctrine, and respect for His law, or attachment to His cause? Where is His kingdom of truth, and justice, and love? Where is the sign of its progress? Where is the sign of its existence? He has laboured hard and wisely, but where is any fruit to be seen? He has done all that He could do in the strife against sin,

and now there is sin everywhere triumphant in the land. The labour seems lost—the strife has ended in failure, defeat, disaster. He was very much affected by what seemed His ill-success. He marvelled, indeed, at one time because of their unbelief. It struck Him as a strange thing that they should not believe. He marvelled! It deeply afflicted Him. He wept to think that all He had done to gather the people under His wings had failed. He was surprised and grieved, but not shaken in His confidence. All that is seen at present would seem to suggest the abandonment of His work. But He looks to the unseen and future, and with unabated trust. His cause is that of truth and righteousness; God is with the true and right. The Father is with Him. The truth which He has taught will yet prevail; the righteousness which He proclaimed will be established; He will rule the world and save it; He will draw all men to Him. The labour which seems all lost will be rich in fruit. The strife of His life against sin, which seems to have gone all against Him, will end in His triumph. He holds His faith to the last, amid all these signs of failure, discomfiture, and disgrace. He dies strong in that faith.

That trial of faith is common, in varying degrees, to all His servants.

We are often disheartened in our work, weary and faint in our hope from it, and would now and then almost give it up, under the sense of past failure. We should at such a time, first of all, seek to be clear where we have failed, and why we have failed. It may happen that it is not our work that has not prospered, but that we have not prospered by means of it. We are troubled that we have failed: is it for the cause or for ourselves?—how much for the cause, how much for ourselves? It is a natural sorrow that we feel when we are disappointed in the result to ourselves of what we have done. But we should not judge of the result of our work by its relation to ourselves. We may have acquired no distinction by it, no eminence in it, no prominence even, no power, no praise: that is no reason why we should lose faith in the work itself. Our profit by it in this life is not inseparable from its progress. Some prosper by their work, while the work does not really prosper by them. Many get nothing by their work—no name or influence, or worldly prospect to themselves—but the work gets on by them. Our work may prosper,

though past experience may make it plain that it will not be to any outward fame or glory to ourselves. When it is the work that has really failed, we should ask and know, if possible, why it has failed, before we drop our hands or look despondingly to the future. Perhaps we did not seek the ends of the work so much as some ends of our own. Perhaps we subordinated the work to some personal and selfish aim. We inquired, it may be, how we might rise and be seen, and swell and aggrandise ourselves; we thought it might be by that form of Christian work to which we gave ourselves. It has not prospered in our hands; we are therefore cast down, and want faith to go on with it.

But how could we expect it to prosper, when it was not *its* prosperity that we sought? Why should we lose heart, and hesitate to go on with it, because it has not prospered, when that was not the thing which we desired, and for which we laboured?

Or it may be that our work has failed, not because our aim was selfish, but because we were heedless in our action of the practical condition of success. To succeed in it required much prayer, and we may have prayed very little. To succeed required care,

diligence, wisdom, earnestness, and we may have been careless, idle, heartless, self-indulgent. To succeed in it required holy living as well as Christian teaching, and our life may not have shone in illustration of the doctrine we taught. We have failed in it on this account, and we can hardly go on with it because we have so failed. But we did not deserve success; we had no right to expect it while disregarding its conditions. There is no reason for ceasing from it, or being weary and faint in it—losing faith—because we have failed in it under these circumstances.

There is reason why we should deplore that failure, reason enough in the causes of it. We have failed in our work because we sought to serve ourselves, not the cause—or ourselves more than the cause which we professed to serve.

It was God's glory that we spoke of, it was of our own glory that we were chiefly thinking. It was Christ's blessed name that was on our lips, and we lauded it; it was our own names that were foremost and uppermost, even more than Christ's name, in our thoughts and purposes. It was Christ's cross that we lifted up, but we were mainly interested in lifting up ourselves by means of it, and to draw

all men to *us*. It was in the interests of men, and especially of men's souls, that we openly laboured; it was our own interests that we were most of all seeking. We used men's sins, and made use of their wants, and sorrows, and of their destinies. We made use of death and judgment, and heaven, and hell, and eternity. We made use of God and of Christ, of Christ's Church, of Christ's doctrine, and of Christ's cross, in the service of some poor earthly ambition of our own. We went about, we did the work, and then were a good deal anxious to know with what result to ourselves. We wondered what men thought of us; we listened for what they might say of us, waited to see how they would treat us. We were not so anxious about the spiritual results of it in them. We have failed in the work, and no wonder we have failed, and we have some good reason to deplore the failure and to lament the cause of it.

And not less when it has followed from the other cause,—the disregard in our active life of the conditions of success. We would not pray or do the work heartily, or do anything that was irksome, or deny ourselves much, or anything, or be careful about the sanctity of our lives. And so we have failed in our work. The cause here also may well

make us mourn our failure. There is great reason to deplore it for its own sake. The nature of the failure is as serious as its causes.

There would have been less sin in the world, less dishonour to God, less sorrow to man, had we prevailed in the strife, but we were beaten. There would have been souls saved had we conquered, but we were defeated. The work would have been for eternity, glorious through eternity, had we succeeded, but we failed—and failed through that selfish ambition, or through that guilty negligence. There is sufficient reason in that failure for self-abasement and shame and remorse, for lying low in the dust, and for prayer for Christ's forgiveness and for grace to amend, but no reason for the relinquishment of hope or faith in the work itself.

It is not always, however, that our failure is attended with such ground for self-condemnation. We have failed when we did not seek our own, but the greatest ends of our work, and when we sought them with some earnest labour and with some sacrifice to ourselves. Little or nothing has come of many of our aspirations, plans, prayers, and efforts, in which we were in the main unselfish and earnest. In how many ways and instances

have we thus failed. There is a falsehood which we tried to expose and ventured to denounce: we have not succeeded in bringing discredit upon it. There is a vice against which we strove: it does not seem the less practised to-day. There is a principle which we advocated, but it has made little or no way in popular favour. We thought, perhaps, to build up a living Church—it was the end for which we prayed and laboured—but the task was too heavy for us, and we failed. We spoke to a society of Christian men of the beauty and worth of the Christian life; we aimed at their growth in knowledge, and spirituality, and purity, and love; we set Christ before them, that, beholding Him, they might be changed into His image: year followed upon year, and no change into that image was apparent. The signs of growth in knowledge, spirituality, purity, love, were not visible. One and another, one family and another, changed for the worse; the dim image, once faintly seen in them, seemed to fade away. We cared and laboured for the unconverted: they mostly remained unconverted, and some of them only went further from God under our care and labour. We looked and spoke with much hope to the young, and watched their growth in stature and knowledge, saw

them rise into manhood and enter on its freedom, when they were lost to us and to the Church; it seemed as if it was for nothing that they had listened to our words, and seen our life through all those impressible years of their childhood and youth. We have followed some to the grave, who often and long received our instruction, and such influence as went with our life and labour: we had no joy at their graves at the thought of the good we had done them. We did not make special public reference to them on the Sunday after their burial, or, if we did, it was to their death rather than to their life; or, if the latter was unavoidable, it was done in such general ways as to signify little or nothing. We felt, or feared, that we had failed with them.

With how many have we failed! How many of our hopes have been disappointed, how many of our aims defeated! For how much of our labour have we nothing to show! How poor the result of that work of our life in which the motive was not selfish, and the action not without some real effort!

So we often think and say, and for this we are weary and faint in our minds. We have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nought. We can hardly proceed with that work. We proceed

with it languidly, mechanically, despondingly, expecting little from the future when the past has been so barren.

Then the example of the Master's faith reproves our faithlessness, and should restore our confidence. We should consider Him, how His faith in His work was unmoved, when, at the end of His life, all seemed to have failed. We have the same general ground of confidence that He had. God was with Him, and God was with us in that true service which we rendered. When we spoke those words of truth, we gave utterance to God's mind in us; He was speaking by us. When we spoke to them in the true spirit, His Spirit within us was in communication with those whom we addressed. When we did those deeds of righteousness and love in the Christian service, God worked in us to will and to do; God was with us. His word spoken by us could not have returned to Him void. His work done by us could not have failed of its purpose. Where we seem to have failed there must have been hidden success.

The cause which did not advance by our efforts to serve it may have been saved by those efforts from retrogression, or if it went back it may not

have gone back as it would have done but for what we did. Those who got no better through our labour for them might have become worse without that labour. Those who grew worse might have grown worse still but for our work. We may have prevented we know not what evil, where we did no positive good. We may have done positive good where there was no sign of it seen by us. It does not appear how in those cases about us we succeeded, it does not appear that we succeeded at all. We seem to have failed, but, seeing that God was with us, as He is with, and by, all His true servants who are truly doing His work; seeing that He was speaking to men by our lips, breathing upon them through our spirit, working for them by our hands; seeing that He was taking up our work and including it in His work, that He was using us for His purposes; seeing that He was making our will one with His own, we may think hopefully on what we did, and trust that somehow good came out of it, that fruit may yet be gathered from it, that we have not quite or really failed where we seem to have failed.

We have, in common with our Master, that ground in God for faith in our work where it would appear

to have failed. And how much less the trial of our faith by apparent failure than that which He underwent. If it seems to have failed often and in many ways, we can see that we have sometimes, and in some ways, succeeded. There is no servant of Christ among us who does not know where to look for some fruit of the true service which he rendered. There is some Christian agency at work which we can see owes something of its efficiency to us. There are Churches, or one Church, which owe something of their light, and life, and power to us. There are men who bear witness by their work, and a still better witness by the happiness and righteousness and usefulness of their life, and their hopes for the next life, that we have succeeded with them.

If what we believe about the soul and eternity be true, it involves no mean success to contribute to the salvation of a single soul, and we know some child or man to whose soul we appear to have done that service.

We can see that we have helped many souls. We have not succeeded as we desired or expected, but, remembering how imperfect our best service was, have we not succeeded nearly or quite as

much as we had a right to expect? If the measure of success depends on the amount of real prayer for it, and the measure of adaptation in the means we employ to serve it, with only so much prayer as we offered, and only so much fitness in the means we employed, have we not accomplished as much as we could have expected? Some of us, perhaps, should rather wonder that we have accomplished so much.

We have, at all events, accomplished something. We can see where we have succeeded, if we can also see where we have failed. We are not left without anything to witness to the work we have done. The fruit of our labour is not all invisible, and to come. Our strife with sin will not end in seeming discomfiture and disaster to our cause. It is not as it was with the Master. Our faith is more gently tried. If it should be yet failing, and we are faint in our minds because so little seems to have come of the purest and best of our labour, let us look to Him and "consider Him." When His life's ministry was closing, and when there was nothing to be seen of the result of the strife, He looked to the unseen, and never doubted God, or the issue of His work.

III. The trial of His faith was still farther, and pre-eminently, aggravated by His last suffering and death. His work had already cost Him humiliation and hardship, and sorrow unspeakable. But the worst is to come. He must die in the prosecution of it, and endure the pain and shame of crucifixion if He will go on with it.

He endured that contradiction of sinners against Himself, because He looked by faith beyond the torture and the shame to the joy that was set before Him—the joy which would flow from His personal exaltation and glory, and from the triumph and reign of righteousness in the world, and the salvation of men through Him.

He looked to that joy set before Him, and, by His faith, it was worth any humiliation and suffering. Very bitter was the cross, very terrible, very revolting, but He does not halt before it, He does not stop to lay stress upon the shame. It was not a great thing to Him, who saw by faith what would follow from it. It was a little thing. He made little of it, He made nothing of it, He despised it.

So His faith was tried, and so it triumphed. We make too much, often, of what the Christian work in which we are engaged has required and received

from us. We should distinguish between the labour spent for the ends of the work itself, and that which was spent on personal and worldly aims of our own in connection with it.

How much has it cost us in labour? How much in strain or effort of body and mind? Not more, probably, than some other work has cost us, or would have cost us, if we had been engaged in it; not more than many a work of another kind costs those who are doing it.

How much has it cost us in care, anxiety, sorrow? We need distinguish again between what we have suffered from the work itself, and what we have suffered from our own faults and errors in the discharge of its duties, not lay to the account of the service the suffering we have put upon ourselves.

How much have we suffered from the work itself through the evil tempers, and the hardness, and selfishness, and envy of man? Not more, perhaps, than we should have suffered from our relations with men in other work; or, if more, we have to set against it consolations and joys which we experienced, and which we should not have found in any other work. If we suffered in some way

peculiar to this work, we had an enjoyment which was peculiar to it, which we should take into account when we would estimate how much of suffering it has cost us.

How much has it cost us in our worldly circumstances and reputation? We might have got more, it may be, of this world's good, been better off, had we given to some other work the time, and thought, and energy we have given to this. We might have had a better place in the esteem of men, been more respected in the world and in the Church, but for our maintenance of some principles we hold to be true and important. How much, is it likely, are we the poorer for our work? How much the lower in social estimation for our devotion to what we hold as our distinctive principles?

Let us count up all it has cost us in labour and suffering, and loss of possession, and social consideration. Let us make the most of it, all that a reasonable estimate of facts and probabilities can justify.

It does not amount to very much, in most cases, compared with the joy that is set before us—the joy of our personal glory, of our success in the cause of righteousness and of human salvation.

For that joy is set before us as well as before the Lord. We enter in our measure, and up to the capacity of our nature, into that joy of our Lord.

It does not amount to much compared with that joy. We should not boast of it, or talk much of it, or think much of it, still less lose heart in the work because of it. When, however, this happens, as it sometimes may, and we cannot see or appreciate the joy set before us, so as to make light of what our work has cost, and we get weary and faint in our minds because it has exacted so much, we should then look to Jesus and see His faith in the joy to come; how, for the sake of it, He met the malefactor's doom, made nothing of the infamy—despised it.

It is not, however, so much or so often what the work has actually cost us, as what it would cost us if we met its demands, that tries our faith and brings out its weakness. There may not have been much self-denial or sacrifice in the actual service of our past life, but we may see that there would be a great deal if we were quite, or nearly, true to our principles and profession, more faithful to Him whom we call Master. If we went where we were wanted, and most wanted, we

should not be so often or so long in the easy and pleasant places. If we did what was needed and most needed, we should not be so much occupied with things that are light or agreeable, or in some way profitable to ourselves. If we refused to keep silence in the presence of any hypocrisy, or falsehood, or wrong, however sanctioned by the conventionalism of society in the world or the Church, we may see what we should lose by it, and suffer for it in censure or obloquy. If we looked around us to the needy and sorrowful, and did what we could to relieve them, we should have to give up much for them, and suffer much with them. If we went to the erring and sinning, and were quite honest and earnest with them, doing all that was required by truth and love to reclaim and save them, we should often have much to get over in our own minds and to endure from them.

There is that covetous man in the Church, who is himself blind to his own character and danger: if we told him what we are sure is the truth concerning him, and which he so much needs to know, or repeated to him, that "covetousness is *idolatry*;" if we warned him that though it does not shut him out from the Church of this land, from any Church

in England, it would shut him out from the kingdom of heaven, we should be doing a very painful service, and one for which we should have, possibly, to pay an after penalty.

There is that other man in the Church, who from choice, and not from necessity, is so engrossed with the cares and gains of his business, that he has no time or spirit for any work of Christian benevolence, little time or spirit for worship or any spiritual service; he needs more than the general warning with which he has become familiar. He has often heard sermons on—"What shall it profit a man," or like texts, but he thought then of those living out of the Church in open ungodliness, and hoped the sermons would do them good. If we went and told him what we have no doubt of, that in his love of this world and his haste to be rich he is in danger of losing his soul; if we urged him to consider how much it would profit him if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul, we feel it would be very awkward and difficult,—to address such language to the respectable professor who is putting his trust for the salvation of his soul in the merits of Christ,—and he might take offence, and we should lose him and suffer for it.

There is a religious household that is fast becoming irreligious. It is giving up, one by one, its godly traditions and customs. With its worldly prosperity it becomes ever more worldly in spirit and habit. It is passing over from the Church into the world, and is bringing the world into the Church. If we carried God's message to the house, and made it plain to old and young whither they were all going, how, advancing on that line, the love of the world would quite take the place of the love of the Father, and the family name would not be respected in the household of God, we should be undertaking an arduous service; we should be giving pain, and feeling more pain than we gave; we should probably be of less account in the eyes of the family, its relations to us might be changed, it might become alienated from us and lost to us; we should be honest and earnest to our own disadvantage.

If we would watch over each other's souls in the way that He who died to redeem them would have us do it, as their worth and wants and dangers require of us, it would be, evidently, at the expense of much anxious thought and feeling and laborious effort; we should have to deny ourselves and suffer in many ways. Our work, if we would

do it as we should, makes a demand upon us which we are often not prepared to meet. It is a great deal that it requires of us; we make a great deal of it; we don't see anything beyond which makes what it requires small in comparison. There is beyond, in the joy of its reward and success, what should make all it requires very light in our eyes, but we do not see it so as to feel it. Our faith in it is weak, so that what is required of us looks great, and too much for us; we are faint before it. We must do the work—somehow, not as it should be done, at that cost to ourselves.

Then we should consider Him. What does the work, when done with all fidelity, require from us *compared with what it required from Him?* What is the labour which it would lay upon us to the labour and hardship it imposed upon Him? What is the possession or position it requires us to relinquish to that which He had to surrender when, being rich and in the form of God, He became poor and made Himself of no reputation? What is any pain or grief it could bring upon us to that woe which it brought upon Him? What is any cross in the path of Christian service before us to that cross which lay in His

path, and which He endured? What is any slight or obloquy it would bring on our name to that infamy which He bore when He was hanged on the tree? And He made nothing of that—He despised it. Shall we make much of what the work, faithfully done, would require from us, when we see that He made so little of what it cost Him?

Leader and Perfecter of faith. Let us look unto Him, so that, through the inspiration of His example, His faith shall be ours, and He shall become the Author and Finisher of our faith. Faint and feeble souls have become strong and brave for the battle of this outward life by the contemplation of examples of courage and heroism. Looking to great leaders, they have caught their faith and trodden in their steps.

There is every ground to require and expect we should look to our greater Leader in the strife against sin, and follow His example of faith. There was reason in His faith: God could not but be with such as He was. His work, wrought in God, could not but succeed, however it might seem to fail. The joy set before Him at God's right hand, in the triumph of righteousness and the redemption of the world, was worth all He could

suffer and sacrifice for it; the shame was a thing to be despised compared with glory infinite and eternal. His faith had reason; there is reason in our faith. Following His faith, we conform to the highest reason. We profess to follow Him. We have entered on the same strife with Him, and we call Him Master, Leader in it, and so bind ourselves to the imitation of faith. We say we admire Him, love Him, adore Him; we call Him our friend—brother—benefactor—Saviour of our souls. We take all names expressive of beauty, glory, and worth in human character, expressive of intimacy and endearment in human relation, and apply them to Him. The example, then, of His faith may be expected to have all the more power upon us for that He is so glorious in our eyes, and so very near and very dear to us. We glory in His cross. We have sometimes ventured to say that we are determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Christ and His cross, we say and sing, is all our theme. Christ and His cross means the love of God to the world. It means the righteousness of God in His dealings with the world. It means atonement for the sin of the world. It means not less, faith in God as

with us, however we may be forsaken of men; faith in the prosperous issue of our work honestly done, however it may seem to have failed; faith in a joy to follow it which makes all it cost of little or no account. To be near the cross so as to feel its influence, is to be impressed with that faith. This is what we need when our faith in the strife fails us, and we are faint because we feel lonely, or because we seem to fail, or because there is so much demanded of us,—to get near the cross. This is what we all need, now and always, for the invigoration of our faith, to get near and nearer the cross,—so to look on the Crucified as to share His faith.

Very near Him and His cross, looking unto Him, and so as to partake in His faith, may we enter on this week's work, and go through the work of our life.

Looking unto Him, we may be sure He is looking upon us. We are surrounded, as we are told, with a cloud of witnesses. Those who have gone through this strife, and suffered and triumphed by their faith in it, are in some sense spectators of our labour and conflict in it. We are sure that in no figurative sense He is looking on, to see how we do our work and bear ourselves in the strife; looking

on to feel for us when our faith is faint and struggling, and failing, and to pray for us, He could say to every one of us, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not;"—looking on, ever waiting till the strife is over that He may crown us. He has not to wait long. It will be soon over with us: if we continue faithful we shall soon be crowned by His hands, and enter into His present joy. And when at length it will be all over in the world, and there shall be new heavens and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness, we shall, if we continue faithful, be there to see and to rejoice in the joy of the Lord: conquerors, for that we too shall have had a part in the strife,—have contributed something to that triumph and reign of righteousness.

And there, in realms whose holy peace and order sin shall never again disturb, we shall have our reward for these few years of strife—with the Lord, for ever and for ever with the Lord.

COMMUNION WITH GOD.

EXODUS XXXIV. 29, 30.

"And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him."

THE more a man is wanting in capacity and culture, the more necessary is it to employ material objects as images of the truth in which you would instruct him. At first dependent for his knowledge mainly upon his senses, he can apprehend what is spiritual only by the aid of the objects of sense. A child is taught by pictures, and other outward signs. Among a people in their rudest state the language of poetry, which is made up so largely of material images of spiritual things, prevails the most, and as they advance in knowledge and cultivation there is the gradual substitution for imagery of more literal speech.

We have this particularly illustrated in the case of religious truth. The further we go back in its history, the more we find it taught, and apprehended, by outward symbols. The ancient people of God, in a low mental condition, could see little of spiritual objects and relations except as they were shadowed forth to them by the things of sense. The Divine method of instructing them was adapted to their condition in this respect. Religious truth was set before them chiefly by means of types or images which appealed to their senses. Their attention was directed to things without them which bore some analogy or resemblance to the truths intended to be conveyed to them. They were able to conceive of those truths by means of those outward things resembling them, and therefore made representative of them. The whole system of their religion is distinguished by this—the revelation of the spiritual by means of material and visible signs of it.

On the occasion to which this text relates, Moses has been forty days with the Lord on mount Sinai, hearing His voice and seeing His glory. On his return to the people there is, unknown to himself, a strange lustre on his face, which makes them all

afraid to approach him. Now, under an economy such as we have just stated that to be, where the spiritual is so continually set forth through the medium of the material and visible, we look at once for something spiritual which is signified by that awful appearance of Moses. It was designed, no doubt, by it to impress Israel with reverence for the mission of Moses, and especially for the Divine communication he had now to deliver. But there was important instruction which it was further adapted to convey, and this is one thing—that much converse with God is followed by a participation in, and reflection of, His glory. This is so directly and forcibly suggested by it that we can hardly help taking it to be one lesson intended to be taught by it. This is one thing which it suggested to the mind of Paul. After writing to the Corinthians concerning that symbolic lustre, he adds: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." We, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into His image after the analogy and example of Moses.

I propose to offer some remarks in confirmation

and illustration of what is thus brought before us, as the result of intimate converse with God.

There are two other things suggested by this most striking passage in the history of Moses on which it would be interesting, and profitable, to enlarge. One thing is the unconsciousness of the participant in the Divine glory of the brightness which he exhibits. "Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone." Men who have become godlike through their intercourse with Him are the last to acknowledge or see the Divine beauty of their character. The holiest is ever the humblest man. The Church in every age has been struck with admiration of St. Paul's character, but he was not smitten with self-admiration: "I am nothing," he said; he was "less than the least of all saints" in his own eyes. He wist not of the glory which others have seen shining on his face.

The other thing suggested, on which we might dwell, is the impression which the unconscious reflection of the Divine glory makes on the beholders of it. The people were afraid to draw near Moses. Men have been made afraid; their consciences have been quickened; religious fear, reverence deepened at times into a feeling of awe, has been awakened in

them by the presence of a fellow-man in whom the Spirit of God has been strongly manifested. We have most of us, if not all, felt the power over us of great sanctity. The truly godly man is thus often useful when he is apt to think himself useless—very useful, most useful, by what he unconsciously reveals of himself. He may wonder one day to find to what a great purpose he was living when he thought he was doing nothing—living to no purpose. The good which he does unconsciously is often far greater than that which he does by deliberate aim and action.

The light of his character constantly shining affects men more than the gifts and labour of his hands. He calls up serious thought and serious feeling in those around him; subdues their unbelief, restrains their sin, impresses them as with a sense of God's presence by the manifestation of excellence to which at the time he himself gives no thought, by a glory that he wists not of.

We limit, however, our further remarks to showing that converse with God is followed by a reflection of His glorious image. Moses looked on the face of God until his own face was divinely illuminated. He was with the Lord forty days and nights;

when he re-appeared, rays of the Divine splendour glorified his own countenance. Looking on God as He is revealed in our own consciousness, in His works, in His written words, and especially in His Son Jesus Christ, in whom He is manifested in the flesh; drawing near by devout thought to Him; communing with Him by adoration and prayer, we partake of His light, His purity and love, we receive the impress of His character, we reflect His image, we catch and retain in the face of our souls something of the moral glory of our Divine Friend. This follows in part from the gracious ordination according to which He bestows His Spirit in answer to the prayer for it. God's Spirit's great work in man is to restore the Divine likeness in his soul. His Spirit is given when we really seek for it. It is given in a measure corresponding with the earnestness and frequency with which we seek for it. We seek for it in our approaches to God; prayer for it forms a great part of our communion with Him. That communion promotes His likeness in us as it procures the agency of the Almighty Restorer of that likeness.

And it follows in part, as the natural result of the converse of friendship. We know what is the usual

effect of much friendly intercourse between men. A child is not more likely to resemble his parent in bodily features and form than in moral features and aspect. A man will generally grow on the image of his friend with whom he has much interchange of thought and feeling. He will think with his friend's thoughts, feel with his feelings. He will remind you often of his friend; he uses his words, he catches his tone, he breathes his spirit. You see his friend reflected in him.

You observe a dark shadow creeping on until it spreads over the moral course of a youth. On inquiry you very commonly find that it is the life of some evil companion, that he has chosen, reflected in him.

There is a whole family shining with moral beauty. Tracing it back to its source, you discover that the parental example and intercourse have mainly contributed to produce what you admire; that the beauty is in great part the reflection of the piety and virtue of the father's or mother's character.

We are all thus, to a greater extent than we often think, just reflecting, by the lights and shadows of our own moral life, the good and evil of our intimate associates and friends.

Now this, we observe, must apply to converse with God not less than to intercourse with man. If by a law of my nature I reflect the glory or the shame of my earthly friend with whom I am often and long in communication, I must, by the same law, reflect the glory of my Divine Friend if I am much in communion with Him. There is no reason why the result in the latter case should not be of the same kind as in the former. The intercourse of a soul with God is as much a real intercourse as any which a man can have with a friend on earth. There is as real a manifestation of God made to the soul as there is made to a man of the character of his friend. There is in the devout meditation of the soul as really a listening to God's communication as when a man is intent upon the words of a friend. There is in the prayer of the devout soul as real a speaking to God as when a man pours out his heart before his friend. God is as really listening and speaking to the soul, the soul as really listens and speaks, there is as real an interchange of thought and feeling as in the intercourse of earthly friends.

The converse with God is in all essential respects as real as the converse with a human friend, so

that there is no reason why the effect should not be in the former case what we have just seen it is in the latter. And it is no true objection to this that God is a Spirit, unseen, whilst my human friend is present to my senses, clothed in body like our own. For it is with the spirit of my earthly friend that I chiefly communicate. They are his thoughts, feelings, the things of his spirit, things unseen in him, with which I have most to do, and which I partake of and reflect. Nor can it be said that the spirit of my friend at my side is more intimately present with me, nearer to me, than God can be, and that, therefore, the communion is more direct and influential; the fact is otherwise. God is nearer than parent, husband, wife, bosom-friend. These are without, He enters the inner sanctuary of the soul: God dwells in us. This is no mystic fancy, no mere figure of speech. There is no devout man who does not feel that He penetrates, as no other does or can, the secret places of his mind, reveals Himself to him there, reveals Himself to his consciousness. The communion with Him is with the one nearest, with the only one inwardly present.

Nor does it alter the case that the Heavenly

Friend transcends, by the infinitude of His nature, the earthly friend. On the contrary, as before, the infinitude of His excellence only makes it more certain that they who see His glory, and commune with Him, will yield to His influence on their hearts and life. The intenser the original brightness, the more sure and clear the reflection of it. There is nothing in the nature or circumstances of the case to prevent the Divine communion from being like in effect to the human communion. As we reflect the character of the earthly friend, we shall reflect the character of the Heavenly Friend, if we are much with Him. We shall return from our interview and communings with Him with some impression of His character. We shall descend from the Mount with a Divine light on our face. This is confirmed by our own observation. Who have been the men among those we have known who have shone with a holy lustre before our eyes, near whom we felt we were nearer than elsewhere to God, who have recalled Christ to our minds, who have made us feel that God was near us? Perhaps we have all known some such persons, and what did we discover concerning their habits? They were often with-

drawn in spirit from the scenes and pursuits of this world, often alone with God, looking with the eye of faith and meditation on Him, giving ear to His words, speaking to Him. And it was the effect which so struck us. There was an appearance not of this earth upon them; their aspect and spirit were not of this world; a Divine light irradiated their life.

We do observe, indeed, much that seems to contradict this. We see men who, we must believe, are accustomed to approach God, and to commune with Him, and who yet fail to catch the Divine likeness; they do not shine before men; the glory is not visible on their characters. This is explainable consistently with what we have just said. In such cases there is something seriously defective in the communion maintained with God. It will generally be found defective in one of these two things, often in both: (1) It is maintained with God under an essentially partial apprehension of His revealed character; (2) It is not sufficiently frequent or prolonged.

(1) The converse with God which fails of promoting the Divine likeness in the soul, is often maintained with Him under a partial

apprehension of His character. He is regarded by many too exclusively under some favourite aspect of His nature. They commune with Him too exclusively in view of such perfections or attributes in Him as accord with their mental taste, or imperfect moral condition. Hence, they cannot, as the result of their communion with Him, acquire a resemblance to Him. They can only reflect what shines upon them; they cannot reflect a glory in God which is hid from their view as they draw near Him. They approach Him, and commune with Him, regarding only certain parts of His character. Then they can, in the nature of things, only receive and exhibit the impression of those parts. Let me refer to some particular examples.

There are many who are accustomed to the contemplation of God, and to prayer to Him, who are yet wanting in strict practical righteousness, in conscientiousness of speech and of action. They have fellowship with God by meditation and devotion, but they do not exhibit the fruit of this in conspicuous rectitude of word and deed in the common relations and transactions of life. They do not come from their engagements with God to

their everyday business and engagements in the world, with the visible impress of God's righteousness upon them. They do not shine with that heavenly lustre.

The explanation will often, in part at least, be found here. They hold converse with God, but not sufficiently as the God of righteousness. Their thoughts and sympathies are drawn forth towards Him in view, it may be, of His greatness and love, not equally or adequately in view of His awful rectitude. They approach Him as the infinite Father, not so much as the just Judge. They conceive of Him partially. He is an object before their imaginations and affections,—not so much before their conscience. And they reflect what they behold. It is not God's truth; they do not hold communion with His truth. It is not God's justice; they do not hold communion with His justice. They reflect what they behold; it is not the God who abhorreth all that is false, who cannot look upon iniquity, but God under some other idea or aspect of Him.

Others, again, in communication with Him have a lofty moral standard, to which they conform; they are men of scrupulous truth and integrity, but they are wanting in religious seriousness and reverence.

You could trust anything to their sense of justice, but they do not breathe a religious spirit. They are righteous men more than religious men. This will often help to explain it. They contemplate God too exclusively in the rectitude of His nature, not sufficiently regarding His greatness and grandeur. They approach Him as the perfectly just One, not equally as the infinitely great One. Their consciences are quickened and rectified, but their spirits are not awed.

There are those, again, who are distinguished by a serious, reverential spirit, and by the integrity of their practical life, but not by love, deep and strong and active. They are serious men, and righteous, but not men of tender and active and large benevolence. They are not quick to feel for the sinning and suffering. They do not go about doing good. They approach the Unseen and return from His presence, but not reflecting the glory of His active love. And this will often be the reason: they contemplate Him more as the great and righteous One than as the God of Love, who never ceases from the activities of His love. They commune with the absolute right, not enough with the infinite love. They receive and exhibit but a partial impression of His glory, because

they behold Him and communicate with Him under a partial aspect.

We need be careful, then, under what view of the Divine character we draw near to God. He must not be too restrictedly considered in His awful infinitude and eternity, or the desired effect will not be produced on our human nature. He must not be too exclusively the impersonation of eternal right, or the desired effect will not be produced on our benevolent affection. He must not be exclusively the impersonation of benevolence, or the desired impression will not be made upon our consciences. No essential element of His revealed glory must be kept out of sight. We must behold Him as He is manifested. We must commune with Him in His infinitude, greatness, love, if we would become as the result righteous, reverential, loving. What we overlook in Him we cannot reflect as the result of our approach to Him.

(2) The converse with Him which fails of promoting the Divine likeness, fails often because infrequent, or if frequent, rarely or insufficiently prolonged. This reason, perhaps, has a larger application than the former.

Many have communion with God, but it is at

distant intervals, or if often, they have but brief moments with Him. In these cases the absence of a permanent, visible impression of His character is accounted for. Moses had been forty days and nights with the Lord when he appeared with the strange splendour on his countenance. It was a prolonged interview that left him glistening with the Divine brightness. The fact is at least suggestive of what is true of the spiritual converse with Him. It leaves behind it little or no trace of Him if it is rare or hurried. A child does not catch the manner and spirit of those whom he sees at distant intervals, or sees often, but only for a passing moment. They are his constant companions, those who live in the house with him, that mould him after their likeness. A man does not exhibit the influence on his character and mind of a friend whom he rarely sees, or whose intercourse with him, if frequent, is confined to passing recognitions, or quick, hurried communications. No, it is the friend whom he often sees, of whom he sees much, who leaves his impress on his daily spirit and life. In like manner the child and friend of God must be often with Him if he would receive His image and shine with His light. Many pass little of their time

with Him, and thus fail to reflect His glory and image. How very little of their time is spent with Him compared to what is passed with their fellow-men; how little compared with what might be spent consistently with the discharge of all the fair claims of their outward life. It is not strange that they exhibit the likeness of the men around them so much more than they do the likeness of God, when they pass so small a fraction of their time with Him compared with what they pass with them.

If many a Christian man could have set before him, in a collected form, the scattered remnants of time which, during a whole year, he gives to direct fellowship with God, he would start to see to how little the whole of that time amounted; he would be shocked to find to how large an extent he lived through the year without God; he would not want to have it further explained how, in cases like his, the Divine communion is not followed by the visible glory. If it be but a few minutes during the morning hours of the day that we pass consciously with God, we cannot wonder that we exhibit but little the evidence of our communion with Him in our intercourse with men. We cannot wonder that they are not struck with us as

having anything spiritual, heavenly, divine in our aspect, that we do not remind them of God; the wonder would be if we did.

What if, instead of a few minutes, we were often a whole hour in direct intercourse with Him in the morning of the day? Can we doubt but that the effect would remain, and be visible through the day? What if we occasionally set a day apart for special intercourse with Him—the day of rest more exclusively; a work-day on some occasions; the anniversary of our birth, of some great sorrow that has darkened our path, of some great mercy which has crowned our head; the last day or the first day of the year. Our life would present then, in many instances, a different aspect to the world; the face would be radiant; so would it if, unable thus to separate entirely large portions of our life for this end, it were our habit, when engaged with our daily pursuits, to turn in spirit towards Him, to realise His presence in the sphere of our worldly activity, to associate His will and glory with our ordinary purposes and business, to be often with Him in spirit, whilst busy among men.

What shall I add to urge the cultivation of this Divine intercourse upon you and myself? Live

with God, and you will be like Him, and will appear like Him, a child of His, with His image visible, the participation of the Divine nature manifest, His glory reflected on your face. Would you obtain the highest distinction of which your nature is capable? Here you have it. Every honour that the human heart has conceived of is poor, every glory fades, when compared with this. Who is the man whom we have reverenced in our inmost soul, before whom we felt that we could bend the knee? Not the man of large possessions, of lofty intellect, of exalted station, but he in whom we saw revealed the moral nature of God. We felt before that man as we could before no one else. Would you be greatly useful? Here is the secret of it. Abide with God, so that your life becomes lustrous through the reflection of His brightness. Let Him be manifested in you. Nothing can plead for Him like His image in His sons and daughters. It is easier to resist every manifestation of God than that which is made of Him in the lives of holy men. The light in Moses' face gave awful emphasis to the words from God that fell from his lips. And so our spoken testimony to man will have tenfold force if, when

we speak, the moral glory shines in our life. Indeed, without it we speak to little purpose. If men hear, but see nothing, they will give little heed. Let the light shine; let our children, friends, neighbours around us, see the light from heaven on our life, and then, when we speak, it will be with Divine power, and when we are silent, we shall not be among them in vain.

Would you enjoy the greatest happiness possible to men on earth? Here it is found. We have it when we have fellowship with God, and reflect the light of His countenance. Walking with Him, have we not heaven's peace and joy? Has not heaven begun? For heaven is where God is in His love and in His image. It may be in the closet, or in this house, or amid household cares, or in the place of business; it may be in a prison, or on a death-bed; it is where God manifests His love, and imparts His image to a soul: there is unearthly peace, a Divine satisfaction — heaven. You need not die to know what it means; you need not go to another sphere. You can know here when the relation of communion and resemblance is established between God and your souls. You share in the joy of those above; you

drink of the same fountain; you know how they feel. The difference is great, but it is one of circumstance and degree, not of kind. Who is prepared for the unseen world? It is he who lives with God, and who has partaken of His nature in this world, that is alone prepared to meet Him in the next world. We go into that presence; death takes us all into His presence; in the world after death we all meet Him. We shall have all, hereafter, an abiding, deep, intense consciousness of His presence. He is present here, but only at times, and imperfectly realised in His presence. The national system by which we are surrounded, and of which we form a part; the business and events of this life; social relations; the cares, the pleasures and pains, the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears which relate to this world, these necessarily shut out God from the mind; but at death they disappear, and become as though they were not. The spirit goes from them to Him who gave it, to Him who is its Father. It feels itself with God; meets Him, by its vivid, intense consciousness of His presence. Every thought is of Him; every feeling is towards Him. As the mote—to use the words of another—

that swims in the brightness of the upper skies is encompassed by the effulgence of noon, so is the spirit that has left the body consciously encompassed by God. To die, is to burst upon the blaze of His uncreated light, and to feel it so as to feel nothing else. Who is prepared for that? Could the man who avoids all approach to Him—he who is most at his ease when he can forget Him, who bears no resemblance to Him, but who in spirit and life is opposed to Him,—could that sinful man bear that presence of God? Could he endure to meet Him, to be with Him, to have all his thoughts and emotions concentrated upon Him, to be consciously living and moving and having his being in the Divine element? No, he could not endure it; thus to face God, to dwell with the Holy One, would wither every hope and joy; it would oppress him, and distress him; it would make him burn with shame, and cry out with anguish. He would need no material flame to scorch him; that awful and holy Presence would be flame enough. No, there is no meetness for the next world, no delight in God's presence in that world, without a renewal of the soul in His image. Would you be prepared for the future, the

eternal future, you must be able to be in God's presence, to delight in it; and to this end, you must be made like Him: and we grow in His likeness by communing with Him. They are prepared to be with Him, who are holding now much fellowship with Him, who are partakers of His nature. As we would enjoy the greatness of that bliss, and be meet for the fulness of it, let us cultivate closer converse with God. There can be no communion without friendship. Enmity forbids confidence. If there be enmity with Him, the enmity is on your side. He is at peace with you: God is love. He calls you to be at peace with Him: He is waiting to be gracious now. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." He would come in and manifest Himself: bid Him not depart; turn not away from Him. Think of His claims on you; of what He has done for you. How will you endure His presence hereafter, if alienated in feeling and mind, in character from Him? Be reconciled to God. Abide with God.

THE DIVINE CONSTANCY.

HEBREWS xiii. 5.

"For He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

SPEAKING on these words on a former occasion, I observed on the vastness of the promise which they contained, and on the force which it gives to the exhortation, "Let your conversation be without covetousness." I wish this morning to remark on the faith which the promise is fitted to inspire in some of its applications and uses.

A few words, first of all, however, on the promise itself. How great are its contents! For it is not, obviously, though we think it is, a promise of the mere presence of God with His people; that need not be a subject of promise. God surely, from the very necessity of His nature, must be always present with His people—must be always present with all men. The promises of a gracious presence

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are not of a gracious presence only, but of a gracious activity of presence. It is a promise of the continuous care of His providence—a promise of the continual supply of His grace in illuminating, and sanctifying, and saving His people: it is, in fact, the promise of Jesus Christ, primarily addressed to the Apostles, but extended to all His disciples: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This is the promise: Christ, God in Christ, is saying that He will never withdraw His gracious presence, never withdraw His holy influence from His servants. To every one of them He is saying, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Just look for a moment upon the contrast which this promise furnishes between the Divine good and all merely created and earthly good. All God's outward and earthly gifts are temporal; they are all subject to the law of change. They are changing by their own character, and they are ever changing in the owners of them, even when they themselves to a large extent remain the same. The persons and things we value, and which are dear to us, and which, as we think, are necessary to us in this life, all leave us and forsake us. If we could

look forward a little way into the future we should see ourselves abandoned by them all; and even now we can see that many of them are on the wing. The beauty, is it not really fading? The health, is it not failing? The strength, is it not declining? The life, is it not sensibly ebbing away? The friends whom we have, are they not, one after another, either changing in their feeling towards us, or in relation to us, or, by a change of world, going away from us? When we look at them on their sick-bed, or when we observe them in their daily life, and mark the change that is taking place in look and form and action, is it not that they are going away from us, leaving us and forsaking us? All that is lovely and grand in this outward world, everything, is leaving us. If indeed we could only give a voice to all God's outward and earthly gifts, and suppose that voice to be uttering their very nature to us, this is what they would be saying—this is what we should be hearing them all saying—"I will leave thee, and forsake thee." The silver and the gold saying, "I will leave thee, and forsake thee." The beauty in face or form, the strength in the arm, the life in the frame, saying, "I will leave thee, and forsake thee." The friend

most dear saying, "I will leave thee, and forsake thee." Every light in the heaven, every flower on the earth, saying, "I will leave thee, and forsake thee." It is no great effort of fancy, just to suppose that every outward gift has become vocal, and is just giving utterance to what is in its own nature; and if we do but just imagine this, this is what we hear—every person and every thing saying to us, "I will leave thee, I will forsake thee." But the nature of God is quite other from that of His external gifts. If His nature were to give utterance in voice, this is what it would say: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." God has indeed spoken; He has spoken by holy men, He has spoken by the lips of Jesus, He is speaking still by the ever-living Spirit of Jesus: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Just consider for a little while how faith—the faith that corresponds with this providence—should operate, and must operate, according to its reality and strength within us. Believing that in Christ we hear God speaking to us (for it is the same thing), that we hear God speaking to us, and see Him dealing with us in Christ; believing that God in Christ will never leave us nor forsake us—will

always remain to guide and strengthen, and comfort and sanctify and save, according to our need, what should follow in our experience from that faith? There should follow from it first of all, I observe, peace and confidence when we look forward to the troubles that may be before us in this life. We do not know what our sorrows will be in their character, or in their number, or in their weight. We do not know into what darkness this path along which we are going may lead, into what depths of sorrow it may descend; and sometimes, when we look forward, it is with some fear and sadness, as our imagination conjures up the possibilities of loss and bereavement, and pain and sorrow, in the future. But, if we believe that Christ will be with us always, that He will never leave us nor forsake us, we are relieved, according to the measure of that faith, from our fear and sadness. What can it matter what the sorrows may be in their nature, or in their number, or in their magnitude? His light with us will be sufficient in every darkness; His consolation will be equal to any time of sorrow; His strength will be sufficient under every burden. If we have this faith in Him, and in the measure that we have this faith, we

must be calm and tranquil, and peaceful and hopeful in our anticipation of the future.

And also when we look forward to the possible moral conflicts that may be lying before us. There may be harder duties before us than any we have yet known; there may be temptations stronger than any we have contended with; there may be battles—moral battles—fiercer than any in which we have yet been engaged. But we need not be alarmed; we shall not be alarmed, if we have faith in Christ that He will be with us. It will be enough in the face of the hardest duties; it will suffice in the midst of the most fiery temptations; it will be sufficient in the most terrible strifes; we shall be carried safely through, we shall be conquerors at last, if He is with us to minister to our necessities; and we must cease from alarm; we must have peace and confidence as we look forward to the possible conflicts, just according as we put faith in Him, that He will be with us with His light and consolation and power.

And this faith is also fitted to give us hope and confidence, when we look forward to the moral progress which is required of us in the future. How to become wiser and wiser ever; how to get

ever purer, how to get ever juster, how to be getting more and more rid of this evil that is cleaving to us; how to be cleansed from every spot that is defiling our nature; how to get more and more in our nature like Christ and like God, so that, at length, we shall attain perfection, and be in our nature and life like the nature and life of God; how, when we have been advancing towards this at so slow a rate through life in the past,—and when the way of progress is so uphill and rugged, and there is so much against us, and we are so very weak, how, notwithstanding, to make way onward in this path of progress, which is the path to God and heaven; how to get up to God and heaven, if we are to get there by a way of moral progress; —we may well despair as we think of it, and suppose ourselves to have to effect this progress in any strength of our own. But God can help us onward,—God can lift us upward,—to that heavenly perfection; Christ can give us more and more light; He can make us more and more pure; He can inspire us with more and more love; He can impress us with His image more and more, "from glory to glory;" "He who hath begun the good work within us" can carry it on even unto

perfection. And if we believe this, and believe that He will never leave us nor forsake us, that He will remain within us to effect this progress in our nature and life until we attain to perfection, then we cease to despair or despond; we have peace as we think of the great work to be wrought yet within us, and which is altogether out of our own power; we have peace and hope and assurance in view of all the possible sorrows of the future, in view of all the possible moral strifes in the future, in view of that great progress heavenward which remains to be made. Believing in Christ, trusting ourselves to Him, looking upon the support in sorrow, and the security in the strife, and the great progress to be effected, as *His* work, as the great business which He has commenced, which He has undertaken, and trusting in Him, putting this faith in Him, we have peace and confidence, and are happy, and are better than happy, we are blessed, as we look forward.

Most of us here this morning need a deeper experience of this peace which comes through faith, of this rest profound which comes from the surrender of ourselves to Christ's care and keeping, of this happiness which is the portion of a

Christian man in this life; we all of us need it far more than we have experienced. "Ah! that is our great need," some say, "that is our only need, to have this faith in Christ, that He will always abide with us, and always meet every necessity of our condition and experience; that is all we need." It is not all; it is not nearly all. Faith has something to effect within us besides inspiring us with peace and confidence as we look forward.

I observe, in the next place, that this faith in Christ should operate so as to quicken us to a deeper sense of our responsibility, and stimulate us more than ever to the duties of a Christian life.

I wish especially to have your attention for a little time to this matter, for this is a part of my subject which, I think, is very often overlooked—which is being very much, I think, overlooked in the present day in the representations made by Christian men whom we all must respect and admire and love. They represent this faith in Christ as being the sum of all Christian duty. Everything that is required of us may be summed up in this one need, the surrender of ourselves by

faith to God and Christ. We have nothing to do but to trust; we have not to trouble ourselves about work, and difficulties, and temptations in the future; we have but to trust, and be at rest, be at peace, be happy. We have to believe, only to believe. We are to leave everything in the hands of Christ, to leave it all with Jesus. We are to have done with ourselves altogether; we are to have done with our own will, and to give ourselves up to the will of Christ; we are to have faith, that is the sum of all that we have to do; we are to have faith, and then leave all the rest to Christ—to have faith and be peaceful, be restful, be happy, having faith. Now this has been uttered by really devout Christian disciples, and there is a great deal of it in print. And I can safely say, concerning that language, with the deepest respect for those who use it, I say it is true, and I say that it is not true. It is quite true that we are to have done with ourselves in the sense of having any confidence in ourselves. It is not true that we are to have done with ourselves in the sense that we are no longer, because we trust in Christ, to take heed to ourselves, to watch and pray and labour for our moral and spiritual welfare and progress.

That is not true; and it is not safe, I think, for any man to go about in this world believing that that is true; that he is, in that sense, to have done with himself. It is true that we are not,—we Christian men, who give ourselves up to Christ,—it is true that we are not to have any longer any will of our own; that we are to give up our will to Christ. It is true in the sense that we are not to have any will that is contrary to the will of Christ; it is true in the sense that our will is to be the same, in its judgments and decisions, as the will of Christ. But it is not true that we are to have no will at all. That is quite impossible. If it were possible, it would be to reduce us to mere machines, it would be to de-humanise us. It is not true that we are not to have our own will, and that we are not to use our own will, because we have surrendered ourselves to Christ. Our will we must have, we must use, we always shall be using. It is of the very essence of our personality, of the very essence of our agency as men, that we should have a will and use it. We cease to be men when we cease to have a will of our own in that sense, as we cease to be Christian men when we cease to use that will in harmony with Christ's own will.

Again, it is true that we should give ourselves up to Christ's care; it is true that we should "leave all with Jesus," as the language, so often employed, is; but not "leave all with Jesus" so as not to care about our responsibilities to Him, about the service which He requires from us—as not to care for prayer, and vigilance, and Christian volition.

It is all in His hands, and He must do it all; but He does it all in and through our desires and aspirations, and volitions and prayers and activities. It is all with Him; but He carries it all on in us, and through us, without destroying our personality, without subverting our agency. It is true that we are to have faith in Christ; but it is not true that, after we have had that faith, and feel very peaceful and very restful, there is nothing more to do but trust again, and be happy and blessed for evermore. That is not true. The true faith in Jesus Christ, whilst it gives peace and confidence, does also deepen the sense of responsibility to Christ. It does not release us from any obligation whatever to our duties, under which we were lying before; it only deepens these very obligations. The true faith in Christ, when it acts

according to its real nature, quickens us to what we have to do, makes us more eager than we ever were to do it, and makes us stronger than we ever were to do it. So far from its being true that we have to trust only, to leave all in the hands of Jesus, so as not to be attempting anything ourselves,—we should, having left it in the hands of Jesus, having committed ourselves to Him, having put our faith in Him, we should now care more for His commandments than ever; we should feel more responsible than ever; we should feel that our obligations are heavier; and that, more than ever, we should be giving ourselves to the great work involved in the duties of the Christian life.

Take one or two human analogies, which, I think, aptly illustrate the case.

A sick man calls in a physician, in whom he has the most entire confidence. He believes that the physician can heal him: he commits himself into his hands. He tells him, "I leave it all with you; I am leaving it all with you." Well, is that all the sick man does? Does he, because he has left it all with the physician, does he do nothing more? Does not he listen to what the physician prescribes? Does not he take heed to

follow the prescriptions? Does not he, just because he has such faith in the physician, does he not take care what he does, is he not careful about the medicines, is he not careful about the food he takes, is he not careful about the exercise prescribed to him, is he not more careful than ever he was, just because he has such a very strong faith in this physician? If he were to say: "Now, I couldn't cure myself. I have tried many, and they couldn't cure me; and here is a physician at last who inspires me with entire confidence. He can, and will, cure me. I will give myself up to him; I will leave myself altogether with this physician, and do nothing at all,"—he could never get well—never, of course. But he never would do that. The more he trusted the physician the more attentive he would be to his prescriptions, the more careful he would be in his application, the more he would do, just because he had such a strong trust.

Or, a soldier is in a battle-field, and on the eve of battle, and his commander passes him by, and tells him to be of good courage and to trust in him, and he will go with and before him; he will carry him safely through, and give him the victory.

And his words fire the soldier. He is full of confidence, cool and courageous in the front of the battle, because of his faith in the commander. But does that faith preclude his doing anything more? Should he not do all the more because he trusts the commander? Does he not fight the more strenuously? Does he not go now as if everything depended on him, just because of the faith he has in his commander?

Christ is the Healer of our diseases; and when we give our souls to His care and keeping, and "leave it all with Jesus," that faith should lead us to be careful that we watch the directions which He gives, take the spiritual medicine, eat of the spiritual food, go into the healthy moral atmosphere, take the right moral exercise. Just the measure of our faith in this great spiritual Physician should be the measure of what we do in conformity to His will and direction.

Or, He is the Captain of our salvation, leading us to the battle, saying: "Follow Me, fight with Me; I will carry you safely through the strife, and make you conquerors;"—and you trust Him. Ah, if you trust Him, you surely must follow Him; you surely must fight with Him; not say, "I trust

Thee, will leave all the battle with Thee, and just be peaceful and happy." This is His voice throughout the Bible. Read Christ's own words. He tells men to come to Him, and to trust Him, to put entire faith in Him; and we see men going to Him, and trusting Him—Peter, James, and John, and the eleven, putting themselves completely in His power, putting an entire faith in Him. But does He tell them to trust, and nothing else? Does He say that all duty is comprehended in trusting Him? Does He tell them, "You leave it all with Me?" No. He does not tell them that. He tells Peter and James and John that they must watch, that they must pray; that they must be occupied with their work; that they must take care what use they make of their talents; that they must lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. This is what He says. They must continue in His words. He says they must keep His commandments; He says, "He that *endureth* to the end shall be saved." This is what I find all through the Apostolic writings: they inculcate faith, the most entire confidence in Christ; but never say *this* all through their writings, that the believers whom they are ad-

dressing have nothing to do but to trust, and be happy and peaceful. They never say that they have nothing at all to do with a view to their personal security and salvation; that they have nothing to do but to put faith in Christ. They are ever exhorting men to the duties of the Christian life; parents, children, masters, servants, husbands, wives—all have their common duties urged upon them, and their special duties arising out of their special relations. The Apostles never say, "Trust, and all else will come as a matter of course;" "Leave yourselves in the hands of Christ, and He will set you right about your duties." That is not the way. But they repeat the duties, and they urge men to study them, and to give themselves to the discharge of them, to be earnest in their Christian work. They tell men that God is working in them to will and to do; but they do not say, "Just rejoice in that, and be happy." No; they say, "Because God is working in you—work out—*work out your own* salvation with fear and trembling."

You remember Paul's words in the language I read at the commencement of the service: "Be strong," he says to the Christian soldier, "be

strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." He begins with that—have faith in Christ; do not go to this battle in your own strength; put no confidence in yourselves; be strong, courageous, but in the Lord, and in the power of His might. But does he stop there? Does he say that if they are only full of faith in the great Captain all will go right, and he need say no more? Oh, no; he has a great deal more to urge upon them. Just as that great English commander—I believe it was Cromwell—addressing his soldiers in the prospect of some battle, said, "Trust in the Lord"—that was his first word—"trust in the Lord, and keep your powder dry;" so Paul, in much higher language, says, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might;" go into the great battle of life, leaving the great strife in the hands of Jesus; but mind to take the helmet and the shield, and the breastplate and the sword, and mind to be always praying. You are to be trusting, but you are to be praying and fighting still.

And how was it with Paul himself? Just look at him when he was in declining life; when he wrote that second Epistle to the Corinthians; when he was so full of his labours and his triumphs, and

his honours as an apostle; when he was so full of faith in Christ, after he had been for long years in union and communion with Him. He had, times without number, left everything to His keeping; he put an unbounded trust in Him, and felt sure that he would be carried securely through all life's trials, and be more than conqueror at last. He was quite sure of it that his Master would never leave him, never forsake him. Well, then, he was happy and did nothing more. Not that. Only after his expressing his longing to be absent from the body and to be with the Lord, he says: "I labour;—*I labour*, that, whether present or absent, I may be accepted of Him; for we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." Ay, the old man, the old Christian, the old apostle, so crowned with honours, so full of faith, he was looking at the judgment-seat before which he was to stand, and he was, in his old age, labouring that he might be approved of the Master.

So, dear Christian brethren, I say, seek more peace, more confidence, more of the joy of faith; we all need more of it; but it is not the best thing of all. Now, I hear, and you hear, men speaking of consolation, peace, and blessedness in the experience,

as though that were the very best thing. No; righteousness is better than that: to do your duty, to fight, to conquer, is a better thing than simply to rejoice; and a better peace and a better joy will come at last out of the faith and the trust.

Be sure that the highest function of faith in Christ is not to make people very happy in the present life. Be not contented to be only happy in the present life. The highest function of the Christian life is not to make men peaceful and happy; it makes them peaceful and happy that they may be thereby the stronger, the stronger in their love and gratitude, for doing the will of God.

May that faith be ours which will give us peace, and, giving us peace, will inspire us with love, and so strengthen us for the Christian work!

And may God bless these words!

ZACCHÆUS.

LUKE xix. 1—10.

"And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who He was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see Him: for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

THIS was a very different entrance into Jericho from that which we read of in the Old Testament, and which used to fill us with so much

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wonder when we read of it in our early days. It was then the host of Israel that entered the city, and the scene was one of bloodshed, and fire, and ruin. Some fifteen hundred years have intervened since that time, when a greater than Israel is come, entering the city of Jericho, not armed with swords, not with any terror, but with a nobler power, the power of goodness and mercy. He comes not to destroy, but to save. He meets a blind man at the gate and He restores his sight. He meets a rich man as He comes into the city, who needs Him, really, not less than the blind man, and the rich man receives salvation and mercy at His hands. Of this rich man and Christ I wish to speak for a little while this morning.

Let me call your attention to Zacchæus as the *rich publican*, as the *inquirer*, as the *called*, and as the *saved*.

First, to Zacchæus as the rich publican. Jericho was a great city, a city of great traffic, and the people were very much ground down by the power of the Roman government; the greatness of the traffic in the city gave a wide field for the work of the publican, the tax-gatherer. We learn from the Jewish history of Josephus, that there was not

only the general business of the city, but also growing in the wide district all around it a certain balsam which yielded very richly, to the revenue of the Roman rulers, in taxes; so that the city of *Jericho became very much noted for the number of* publicans within it, as well as for other reasons. Now this man Zacchæus was, we read, the chief of these publicans; he was, as we should say, the head of the Excise, and the Custom-house people. His position was one of very special temptation, and it ordinarily led, as it led in his case, to very much wrongdoing. For he was not a mere agent of the Roman authority who received a fixed amount as his salary for collecting the taxes; he was what would be called the farmer of the taxes, that is, he paid a certain sum to the government for the right and power to collect the taxes, and that sum was taken as representing the value of the taxes; and then he went and collected all that he could, and all that he could collect beyond the sum which he gave to the government was his own. You will see at once how his position would tempt him to extortion and oppression, and the publicans generally yielded to the temptation of their position, as this man, Zacchæus, we know did. And his

position was otherwise one of great moral peril. He was there in the midst of the Jewish people, the agent and the representative of the Roman rule, and therefore most odious to them, as reminding them by his presence and by his action, of their national subjugation and slavery; odious to them on that account, as well as because of the oppression and the extortion which they attributed to him; and because he was thus of ill repute, he would be the more ready to yield to the temptation to which he was on other accounts exposed. For when a man has no character at all to lose with the society around him, he has lost one of the greatest of his supports against temptation. Men think evil of him; they cannot think worse of him than they do now, whatever he may do. When he can speak thus to himself, he is all the more ready to do whatever evil thing may come in his way. You should, therefore, dear friends, be very slow indeed to give up any man as irreclaimable; that is the way to make him irreclaimable. Do not fix a stigma unnecessarily upon any man's character and life; that is the way to add to the evil in his character and life. Try and hope the best from the worst, and so encourage him to hope somewhat for

himself, and to seek under the power of hope after a reformation. Do not give anyone up if you possibly can help it. These publicans were given up; this man, Zacchæus, belonged to this class that was regarded as hopelessly bad, and he was a moral outcast from the society around him, and therefore would the more readily yield to the temptation by which his office was beset. That is the man we have before us in this narrative; a man who had extorted and oppressed, a man despised and hated for his office; a very rich man, we are told, and a rich man who was largely indebted for his riches to his dishonest practices.

Now look for a moment at Zacchæus the *inquirer*. The fame of the Prophet of Galilee had reached his ears, and it had awakened a great interest within his mind, and all the greater interest, no doubt, for that it was reported concerning this Prophet that He was unlike all the other teachers and leaders of the people, in that He did not shrink back from the publicans, the tax-gatherers, and men otherwise of the worst repute in the Jewish society, but mingled with them, and allowed Himself free intercourse with them. We can hardly doubt that this man Zacchæus, hearing this of Jesus, would have

whatever interest he might otherwise have in Him greatly intensified. The reported works of the Prophet of Nazareth were very strange, but the strangest thing to Zacchæus was His reported intercourse with the men of his occupation, and the men of his reputed character. That is the thing that would strike him most, and would come nearest home to his heart. It quickened his curiosity to see Him; so that when he found He was coming that way he was impelled by an irresistible desire to see this man of whom such strange things were said, and so he puts himself in His way. He could not get near Him because of the crowd which surrounded Him, and perhaps for other reasons he did not care to get near Him; he could not see outside the crowd because of his bodily stature; but he was not to be thwarted: he looked round for some point of eminence, and like a boy he climbed up a sycamore tree which stood by the wayside, and there he waited for the coming of the procession which accompanied Jesus of Nazareth.

What was it that really moved him? Was it curiosity only that actuated him, and determined this earnest and vigorous effort which he made to see Him? It cannot be that it was merely

curiosity. We conclude that there was something else, a higher and a nobler feeling, from the fact that he so arrested the attention and the interest of Jesus Christ, and that he drew from the Master such a special care. There must have been in that man whom He singled out from all the other people around Him and in that city, something besides curiosity to awaken His interest, and to lead Him to the course which He adopted in respect to him. It could not have been that he was a publican; it could not have been that he was rich; it could not have been that he was very curious. These were not the kind of things to awaken the attention and interest of Jesus Christ. There was nothing in the profession or the character of the tax-gatherer, nothing in the vulgar curiosity to awaken the interest of Jesus, but a good deal to repel His interest. It is quite true that He had had a character for consorting with publicans, and for His kindly treatment of them and the other worst characters in society, but then the publicans with whom He was found in association were such publicans as were drawn to Him; they came to Him, they were attracted to Him, they felt there was something in Him that won

upon them. There was something in Him which they needed, and which showed that in all that came to Him there was some kind of preparation for receiving that which He had to give; and therefore we conclude here that when this person is chosen out of the thousands in Jericho to be the host of Christ, and to be in friendly association with Him for some hours, that there was something in him which interested the Master greatly. It was not that he was a publican. It was not that he was a wrongdoer. It was not that he was impelled by powerful curiosity. There was something *in the man*. He had put his hands to a disreputable occupation, but, as I understand it, he had not lost his self-respect; he had not lost all care for himself and for his soul; he had done great wrongs, but he had not lost the sense of the wrong which he had done. The evil lay upon his heart. He was not reconciled to the practice or the power of the evil. He was a very prosperous man in his way, but his prosperity had not hardened him. He was not content either with his prosperity; he was a very rich man, but he found his riches not to fill his soul; he felt poor and empty within; and, as I conceive of him, there

was within him a vague look-out, a vague, wistful look-out for somebody, something, somewhere which might meet his need as nothing had ever yet done,—the great need of his nature, the wants of his heart which made him restless; and who could say but what this Galilæan Prophet, who had spoken such strange words, and done such wonderful deeds, and who did not shrink back from the publicans and sinners,—who could say but what there might be found in Him that which he felt he needed. I take it that something like this was the condition of this man's mind, and that his natural curiosity led him with such determination of purpose and of effort to put himself in the way of Jesus. I think that something like this explains it,—the determination which he exemplified. Now if it be so, it reminds us, I think, that we should not judge of any man merely by the class to which he belongs,—which we are very apt to do,—not treat men in our judgment by classes, as though each in a certain class participated in all the evils of that class: it is what we are very apt to do. A man may be occupying himself with a business that belongs to very disreputable people; but you must not judge of that man by his business or by the

class to which he belongs. That man may be not a worse man, but a very much better man indeed, than great numbers who are busying themselves in some of the most respectable pursuits of society. Or a man has sunk into some degraded and immoral class, but there may be some in his class, and he may be one of them, who are very much better than the people in respectable classes in society. It was thus that Jesus Christ found it. He found among the disreputable people men who were nearer the kingdom of heaven than He found amongst those who received honour and respect. He found among the publicans what He did not find among the Scribes and Pharisees. He found among the publicans what He did not find among the priests.

Jericho was noted for the number of priests within it; but we do not find that any priest came out to meet Him with any good intention. We do not find that He had anything to say or do with the great number of priests at Jericho. It was the publican, the man that everybody looked down upon and scorned,—*that* was the man that showed some sympathy with Christ. Indeed, it is a curious fact that we never read of any priest at all, not

once, I think, all through history, showing Him any favour. There was no priest, that we read of, that believed in Him or received Him into his house, or had any friendly intercourse with Him at all. When He spoke a parable and wished to have a typical character for the true worshipper and the false worshipper, the respectable Pharisee was the hollow man, the despised publican was the true man and worshipper. Not among the priests, the most sacred class in society, did He find any acceptance. We should have supposed that among the men who were busy about the altar, so near God by their profession and by the functions of their office, He would have been first received. They, *they* would be the men to welcome the Messenger of Heaven, the Image of God, the very Son of God. Not they, not one of them. They were the *outcasts*, men out in the streets, whom the respectable people of society shunned, the hated tax-gatherers, that received Him. And we doubt not it is to a considerable extent much the same now; that among those who are condemned by the general judgment of society, and looked down upon as irreclaimably lost, there are to be found men and women who are nearer Christ than a great

number of decorous Pharisees who are this morning worshipping outwardly in our churches and chapels. And the lesson that we would draw from it is this: do not judge of individuals by the classes to which they belong; do not give up hope of individuals because of the class to which they belong. You who are engaged in Christian work, do not hesitate to labour among those who are reputed to be altogether past hope. It is among the worst of men you may find those whose hearts are most readily touched by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Christ Himself found a welcome among the publicans and sinners such as He did not find among the priests and the Pharisees.

I observe upon Zacchæus as the *called*. By and by the procession passes that he had been so long eagerly looking for, and it comes just under that tree where he had placed himself, and just as it comes there the great Prophet looks up from amidst the crowd, and says: "Zacchæus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house." It is supposed by some that when the procession just came to the spot where Zacchæus was found, some of the people around Jesus, knowing the rich publican so very well, and struck and amused

and wondering at seeing him up there, said among themselves: "Why, there's Zacchæus! there's Zacchæus, the rich publican, up in that tree;" and that Jesus overheard this, and that hence he may have learnt Zacchæus' name. And, indeed, it may have been so; He may have known his name not in virtue of any supernatural knowledge which He possessed; but you see that He knew a great deal more about him than his name. As He looked upon the face of that man, He looked through the face into the soul. He needed that no man should tell Him, because He had an insight, through the Divine light that was in Him, which enabled Him to look through men's faces into their souls, and to read what was there. And now, as He looked on Zacchæus, He read what was within him—his sin, and his want, and his desire. He knew him altogether, and knowing him altogether, He could speak to him with the most unhesitating assurance. "Make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house." He knew that man,—what kind of response he would be sure to make to Him. Here was one of the purposes for which He had come to Jericho. Here was one of the lost sheep whom He had come to seek and save, found, and it

is no sooner found by the Great Shepherd than He is as eager to lay hold upon it as Zacchæus was eager to see Jesus. The rich publican little thought how closely he was observed, how entirely he was understood; and we, dear friends, are reminded often that we are very closely observed, and that we are better understood than we are accustomed to imagine ourselves to be. There is One whose voice we do not hear with this outward ear who could call every one of us by his proper name. It is a name more familiar to Him than to any friend or relative. There is One whose unseen eye looks down on every face in this house, sees every expression on it, and who knows what it means—who knows what every look and every smile expresses, and who knows what the looks and smiles conceal, knows what is within every one of us. The God that was in Jesus Christ sees and knows us now and altogether; all that past life, with the vein of evil that has been running through it; all the present meanness and littleness and selfishness; all the secrets that we would not for the world have known to men; all the wants, the sorrows, feelings, hopes. He who looked through the eyes of Jesus of Nazareth is looking at them all. It is a thought, perhaps, to some of terror, but I

think we shall be glad of it; yes, it is wise in every one of us to congratulate ourselves that there is One, *One* who knows everything, for if He did not know all our inward wants, how could He supply them? If He did not know all about the inward life, in its occupations and experiences, in its littlenesses and humiliations, how could He rectify them? If He did not see the inward peril, how could He save us from it? Yes, we adore Him for His omniscience; it is better He should know the very worst, as well we should remember that He knows *all*. The effectual call of Zacchæus followed upon that full knowledge of him which Jesus had. As I have before said, He did not call him to Himself, this publican and unrighteous man, just from groundless partiality, without any reason for it at all but that He would have it be so. You may be sure there is no sovereignty in God's work of that kind. We cannot see the reason, and we call it sovereignty, but there is a reason, the highest and best reason. He did it *because of what He saw in that man's mental and* moral condition; this was the rule of His procedure all through the days of His flesh: when He called men and brought them to Himself, they were men who had in them some susceptibility which gave

them a preparedness for receiving what He had to give. He did not call and bring to Himself the Scribes, and Pharisees, and Sadducees; they had no susceptibility, there was no preparation which they had undergone, no predisposition therefore to give heed to His voice when He called. And the rule of the Divine procedure is the same now; when Christ by His Spirit calls men and brings them to Himself, they are men who have some susceptibility of nature to the influence of that call, who have undergone some preparation. I would not say that as an absolute rule, but as the general law of the Divine procedure. We hear of very sudden conversions. I believe there are sudden conversions, but I believe most firmly that the great bulk of those which are called sudden conversions are the conversions of men within whom something has been going on, preparing them for the critical hour, and predisposing them to yield when that hour shall come, something which was unobserved by anyone, perhaps even by themselves, and therefore the thing was called sudden. If we had power to look into the mental condition and susceptibilities and experiences of those who thus were suddenly turned, we should in most cases find that there had

been something in their nature, something in their experiences, something in their sensibilities, something in the moral circumstances which swayed them, which prepared them for what took place when the hour came. What was sudden to us was not sudden to God at all. I believe that is the rule, and I think it is important that we recognise it for this end,—that we may be wise, and watch, and guard, and encourage in ourselves and in those around us all susceptibilities and experiences which do not involve the surrender of the soul to God, but which favour it, which predispose to it. You, teachers, and you, parents, need this wisdom and care, which should keep you in watchfulness for the nature and condition of thought and of feeling which, in the exercise of your work, you can see tend to make it more likely that Christ will be accepted when He comes face to face with the soul.

Observe for a minute or two upon Zacchæus the *saved*.

He made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully—*joyfully*. I think it is quite reasonable to suppose that it was a joy of triumph in part. You know he was looked down upon by them all, and hated and condemned; but now here he is before

them all, and the great popular Prophet is choosing him to be His host, passing by all the houses in Jericho, to his house. We suppose some good to be in Zacchæus; but it was just in his human nature to triumph over all those around him. "Why, it is to me, you see, to me He comes after all, and He favours me more than you all."

Apart from any considerations of another kind, his joy at seeing Christ would be a joy for the distinction thus conferred upon him; and it would be a joy also that would spring from that sympathy which he had with Christ, that sympathy which he could not explain, but which he felt with this Nazarene Prophet when he had seen Him.

Arriving at his house, he stood up and said: "The half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." We do not know what the Lord had said to him; we have no record in the Scripture of the words that passed between the two before this passage. Some speech passed between them, no doubt. No doubt the Lord spoke, and that His words made an impression; but no doubt, too, His look, His tone, His friendly manner, His coming to the house, His free inter-

course with this publican of ill repute, gave immense force to whatever word fell from His lips, which possessed immense force of itself. Indeed, it would seem, if you look at the narrative, there is no account of anything that Jesus said at all. We are encouraged—looking at the narrative—to ascribe the great impression made upon his heart, the great change wrought in his soul, in the purpose of his life, to this condescension, to Christ's tone and manner and action. He came down to him as no man with any sacredness attaching to him had ever done before; stooped, without making him feel that he was stooping; made him feel that He was a man like himself, and a friend, that He was of the same family with him. He would come and stay at his house: He was his brother. This conquered Zacchæus—he could not resist it; he loved Him, and then he trusted Him, put faith in Him. He became a son of Abraham: he was a son of Abraham, I believe, a Jew; but now he became, as Christ said he was, a son of Abraham—a son of Abraham by faith. He trusted in Him, loved Him.

Observe now on two things: first, the secret of our influence on those whom we would spiritually

help; and, secondly, the character of salvation as it is here brought out. I must not enlarge, but I must say a word or two.

First, observe the secret of our influence, if we would serve effectually those whom we would spiritually help. What did Christ *say?* We are not told of anything He said. For our guidance in the matter, we are only told of His manner, and His putting Himself into social relations with the man; that He made a man of him, a friend, a brother; and that thereby the man became a son of Abraham.

And so, dear hearers—Christian workers especially—when you would work, would raise up the moral outcast, don't affect moral superiority. Don't let them feel that you are stooping down out of your sphere of purity and holiness to them. Don't do that, if you would touch their hearts. Explaining to them, rebuking them, threatening them, it may be warning them, you may speak to them; but your tone, your look, the kind of hand with which you touch them, the freeness of the intercourse, that is the thing to give power to the speech. The *man* that is in you must be the great instrument of your success; that will give power to the speech, and that will give power without the

speech—may save of itself. So, dear hearers, be kind, be friendly. Don't seem to condescend: don't assume anything. Go to the worst man whom you try to serve, and make him feel that you are gentle, tender, human; that you are a child of the same Father with him; that he is your brother; that you can come to his home, and look into his eyes, and touch his heart, as the heart of brother touches brother. That is Christlike; that is how the great Jesus of Nazareth conquered men; that is the way, I believe, He conquered this rich publican. Go you, and do likewise.

(2) And then see the character of salvation. "This day is salvation come to this house." Then Zacchæus is safe: will be safe in the hours of great peril to come; safe from the great prison; safe from the flames; safe, no doubt. The man that is saved now need not fear any prison or flames. It is done: "This day is salvation come to this house." But how saved? Saved by faith; he trusted in this Jesus, gave Him his heart, surrendered himself to Him, put faith in Him, and so was saved. But how did his faith save him? Wherein does it appear that his faith in Jesus saved him? Why, it appears in this: "The half

of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." There is salvation; there is the saved man. That man won't wrong his neighbours any more: that man will not be hard to the poor any more. There is salvation. Saved from unrighteousness, he is saved from selfishness, saved by faith in Jesus. A man brings his heart to Christ; well, he is saved. If he gives his heart to Christ, then, when, he has any business transactions with his neighbour he is just. When he goes amongst the needy, his heart is touched. He is righteous in all his transactions. He sees Jesus in the poor and needy and sinning. He sees Jesus there, and he has given his heart to Him; so he gives his goods to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. You must find God in man, and give to God in man, if you are to be saved at all. This is what Christ does for us: He inspires our confidence in Him, and then sets us right with our fellow-men. You sit at His feet when He teaches. This is what you learn: to be righteous and unselfish. You follow Him through His course in life, and this is what you learn; to be just to everybody, and to be loving. You stand, as some of us

intend to do this morning, within sight of the Crucified One. What is it we see there? Why, Christ put to death for the sake of righteousness; Christ put to death for the sake of love; Christ dying for the sake of righteousness, dying on the cross for the love of God and of man. And if we learn aright the lesson of the cross, we shall exemplify it in our life, by our righteousness and by our love. So may the faith which we are required to put in Christ save us all. Amen.

RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENT.

MATTHEW xxi. 9, 10.

And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest. And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?"

THE city of Jerusalem was moved on the occasion of the Lord's entering into it at this time partly from curiosity and partly from alarm, but the excitement was, in good part at least, a religious excitement. The people had come somehow to believe that the prophet of Nazareth was the Messiah, and He was now, they thought, about to assert His great power. Had He not wrought wonders of late? Had he not the other day raised Lazarus from the dead? Each wonder showing that He must be the long-promised One upon whom the

* Preached at Highbury Chapel, on Sunday morning, May 30, 1875.

hearts of the people had been set. He is come at last; and so they rend the air with their Hosannas, and are filled with praise. Their emotions rise to the highest pitch of excitement. At other times before this in the life of Christ we meet with examples of great awakenings of religious emotions by the presence, and the word and the power of Christ: sometimes it was a great multitude, sometimes it was an individual soul that came across Him and felt His influence. And it has ever been the same. There have always been seasons when great multitudes have at the same time been swayed by the force of religious emotion. To some extent it is the case in many large towns, and in the metropolis of our land, and to some extent it is the case in our own city. I know there are some present who have participated in the religious awakening that has taken place in our city; there may be a good many present: there are others who do not participate at all. But at some time of our history I hope I may say all of us have known what it is to be deeply awakened, so as to experience a real emotional excitement in spiritual things. It was a sermon we heard, or a book we read, or it was some conversation with a friend, or it was some serious

illness that came upon ourselves or upon someone that was very dear to us, or it was some death in our immediate neighbourhood or in our own family circle, or it may be that it was some influence that arose from a cause that remained quite hidden from us that served to quicken within us, to some degree of intensity, religious emotions. Now when this has happened to us, as it probably has happened in these days to many persons present, what use are we to make of the religious awakening? No doubt there have been the kindling of religious enthusiasm, the stirring up of strong religious emotions, and no results have followed them—no good results. At other times great results have followed. In our own case, when we pass through those experiences, and know what it is to be emotionally excited, what is it that we are to do that we may attain to the advantage of the excitement—the advantage which it has been fitted and intended to yield? I have thought that a few remarks this morning upon this subject would be acceptable.

How are we to deal with our religious emotions, especially when they are awakened in a more than ordinary degree, so that they may answer their purpose, and answer God's purpose in them? I answer

that we are, immediately on the consciousness of them, to make them subservient to the promotion of the rectitude of our nature and of our life. There comes with the kindling of our religious emotions a strength for action, and our care when we experience them should be to avail ourselves of that strength for right action. When we are very strongly moved to do what we see God and our own conscience require us to do, whilst the strong emotion remains we are to use it by availing ourselves of the strength which comes with it for meeting the requirements of God and of our conscience; we are to act as it directs. But some may think that it is not always safe to act under the impulse of strong feelings. Do not men very frequently do very foolish, and mischievous, and even wicked things because they yield to the impulse of strong emotions? To act thus impulsively, from the impulse of strong feeling only, no doubt is very unsafe. All kinds of foolish and evil things have been done because men have acted under the transient influence of strong emotions. But this is not what I think we ought to do. I am saying that when we are strongly awakened, when we are mightily moved in our religious susceptibilities, we are then to use the

strength which the excitement gives us, for doing that which we see to be required by God and by our own conscience. If our excited emotions urge us to anything that is evil, or anything that is questionable, or anything that is altogether of an uncertain character, we are to deny them, and to resist those emotions. It is when they impel us to do that which we plainly see is in accordance with Christian principle; it is when they urge us to do that which God and our own consciences require, it is then that we are to use the strength which they give, and by the help of those emotions to enter upon that duty, and that work, that lie before us.

Take some example which will bring out plainly all that I mean. There is a man who is satisfied of the evil and of the danger of the sinful life that he has long been leading. He is perfectly aware that he ought to forsake the evil way of his life; he knows very well that he needs Christ and His salvation, and that he ought at once to seek Christ and follow Him —to subject himself to His will, and to accept the blessings of His salvation. His understanding, which precludes the nature of all argument upon the subject, does not avail to induce him to forsake his evil ways and to accept Christ. He goes on, not-

withstanding what he sees is his duty—he goes on living an unrepentant life, living without Christ. But one day something happens which wakens him up to a sense of the evil and peril of that sinful way along which he has been going, and he is oppressed with shame, and sorrow, and fear. He hears about Christ and His love, and His cross, and His salvation, and what he hears falls like music upon his ear, and it touches his heart, it stirs up his emotional nature. He is powerfully moved; there is a tumult of emotion within his mind, sorrow and fear, desire and love commingling; there is an excitement of feeling. What use is he to make of that excitement? He is to use it by at once availing himself of the strength which it brings with it, helping him to forsake his evil way, and to yield himself to the service and will of Christ. He is thus to employ the force that emotional excitement brings with it in aid of his judgment, which has hitherto proved ineffectual to bring him to turn away from his sin to God.

There is another man who is very thoroughly convinced of the truth of Christ's Gospel, and of its adaptation to meet the great necessities of the human soul, and of his duty to do what lies in his

power to extend the knowledge of that Gospel, and to dispense its blessings among his fellow-men. He wants no conviction at all upon the subject; but it is all unavailing. Notwithstanding the strong persuasion that he has concerning the truth of the Gospel, and the adaptation of it to men, and his duty to make it known, he does little or nothing for the diffusion of the knowledge of the Gospel and its blessings. There are few—perhaps none—in the world who owe anything at all to him, anything they know of Christ and of His Gospel, to him. Someone cared for him sufficiently to bring the Gospel to him; but he has not cared sufficiently for any to carry the Gospel to them. There is going on around him a movement, having for its object the diffusion of the Gospel; but he has little or no practical sympathy with it. There are hundreds and thousands of souls, he knows, who need above everything else the knowledge of Christ and of His salvation. He has no doubt about it at all; but he is not moved at all to discharge the duty which devolves upon him. One day something comes over him—some influence or other, something that he cannot explain—which quickens him to a sense of responsibility for

human souls. He wakes up one day to a sense of what he owes Christ and to the cause of His Gospel in the world; his narrow soul opens, his cold and hard nature grows warm, and softens for a while with love's compassion for men. He becomes for a season a man of great emotions, and the claims of the Gospel and of the souls of men come upon him. "What have I done all my life for Christ and my fellow-men? Where is my work in the world? Should I not go and help Him, the great Deliverer, in the redemption of men?" He is greatly moved, excited. What is the use of it? What is the use that he should make of it? Why, he should accept the strength, the strength that comes with that excitement, for doing something at once in that sphere of labour which he has hitherto well nigh, if not altogether, neglected.

There is another man, who has been long living in alienation, estrangement from the fellowship of God, which he once realised. He, perhaps, is going through, still, the forms of Divine communion in the service of prayer and of praise; but he knows very well that he is not with God Himself when he is engaged in those services. He prays, but it is not prayer. He has not prayed in spirit

and in truth for days, for weeks, for months, for longer it may be, and he knows how long it is. He knows very well that God condemns him, he is self-condemned; but this conviction of the wrong of his state does not avail him. He has a strong conviction enough upon the subject; but there comes a time when he has a strong feeling, too, upon the subject. And thus he thinks of it, being powerfully moved—thinks of it, that he should be living without God; that he should be at this great distance from God; that there should be such an immense silence between his soul and God; and it looks to him in quite a new light, wakens up within him quite new emotions, that nothing should pass between his soul and Christ all these weeks, all these years; that it should be with him as though there were no living Christ, no Christ at all, excepting the Christ that is found in the dead page of the history; that he should have lived without any fellowship at all with God—it surprises him, and shocks him, and saddens him, and alarms him. There is an emotional excitement. His whole soul is stirred up within him. What is he to do? What is the use of that emotion? The use of it is to make him

strong for returning to God, whom he has given up; for seeking again the realisation of his friendship and fellowship with Him. This is the use of emotional excitement. This is the true and great need of it: that it may lead us to be and do what is right in connection with those things. Emotional excitement gives strength. When strong emotions accompany any purposes of man, or any pursuit of a man, they make him stronger for the purpose; they nerve his arm for the work in which he is engaged. So in moral and spiritual matters. A man who is deeply moved, a man who is quickened to deep, keen, strong, tender emotions, is in virtue of them the stronger then for doing what Christ and his own conscience—for these always go together—for doing what Christ and his own conscience require of him. There are many considerations which should lead us to avail ourselves of this strength, which comes from emotional excitement. I shall name only one or two of them.

First of all, let me say that if a man does not, when he is emotionally very much quickened, do that thing which he sees to be right, and required of him by God and his conscience, there is no ground to hope that he will do it when the excite-

ment has passed away; and the excitement will pass away. It is not desirable that it should last, that a state of excitement should be our normal state, and it is not possible; it will pass away. And when the excitement of these emotions has passed away, then there will be an impetus, an impulse, lost, and therefore so much strength lost for doing that which is required of us. The man is, with the subsidence of the excitement, weaker than he was whilst it lasted for doing the work that lies before him; and if he would not do it when his emotions were deeply stirred, there is no ground for expecting he will do it when the emotions, and the stimulus of them, have altogether passed away. The man, perhaps, is required to give up some sin that he knows he is secretly indulging; he is called to forsake it; or it is some act of justice or of mercy towards his neighbour which he ought to be doing at once; or it is the great service of Christ upon which he ought to be entering; he is urged to it by the awakening of strong moral and religious emotions. There are, we may say, three forces that co-operate with him now in doing what is required of him—whether to give up the sin, discharge the duty,

break off the evil action, or enter upon Christ's service—there are three forces co-operating with him: one is the Divine will and command; the second is his own conscience, the power that belongs to its voice; and the third is the emotional excitement. All three are there for the strength of his soul in doing what he is required to do; but he does not do it. Notwithstanding that he has the help of these three, he does not do it. Well, after a little while, there comes a time when one of them is lost. Christ always remains to remind him, and his conscience, always according with Christ when he is true to it. But the emotional excitement is gone, and all that would come to his help from that is now lost to him. Don't you see that if he would not do the thing required of him when he had the aid of these three powers, there is no ground to hope that he will do it now, when he has only the help of two of them? But perhaps you will say that if a man does what is required of him on the strength of the excitement, he will cease with the subsidence of the excitement; and then he will be left to do it just because God commands it, and in obedience to his own conscience. He must lose some time the help of the

excitement. Yes; but if with the feeling that he was strong, he did the thing that was right under the influence of the emotional excitement, and did it again, and did it again, and so broke off from the old habit, there is ground to hope that when the influence has passed away, true principle will take the place of excited feeling. If, however, a man, with the help of Christ to do what is right, responding to the voice of his own conscience, and urged to it by the stirring up of his nature, refuses to do it, I ask you, what ground is there to expect that when the religious awakening is over, and the excitement all gone, and things are come back to their quiet and dead calm, what ground is there to expect that he will do the thing then? There is none. Our safety lies in doing at once, when we are greatly moved, what we see is right to be done.

And this is to be urged upon us on another ground, and that is, that the religious emotion strongly awakened in us will not be awakened always; we cannot expect, from the law of nature, that it will be awakened always to the same degree of strength within us. A man may say, "There is no doubt that now, powerfully moved as I am,

having my emotional nature stirred up to-day, I ought to yield to Christ, and seek His salvation; I ought to obey this law, and put away that evil from me; and it is quite true that if I do not do it now I shall not do it when the emotion has passed away. But then I may hope that the excitement may come again and again, and that many a time in my future course I shall have my feelings roused, and I shall have the advantage that belongs to it." But it is not so, as you all know. I think our emotions do not return after that fashion. You get excited to-day by some cause; the next time you are excited by the same cause and the same circumstances, your excitement will not be quite so strong as before, and the third time it will be weaker, and the fourth time it will be weaker still; and excitement of feeling from the same cause and the same circumstances becomes weaker and weaker, especially in the case of a man who resists the influence of the excitement. Do we not all know that our susceptibility to emotion becomes less and less the more we get familiarised with the things that stir up our emotions? They cannot move us to-day as they used to do. There are men who cannot to-day feel

the great spiritual realities which are presented to them as they used to feel when those realities were fresher and newer, and when they themselves were fresher and younger.

Moved, are you, any of you, at this time, by what has been going on in the city throughout the past week, or by some other secret influence? *Moved*, are you, by some working of God's providence—the loss, it may be, by death of some relative or friend? *Moved*, are you? Then let me urge it upon you to yield, seeing that, as you go on, the emotion from the same causes will become feebler and feebler, and the chance of your salvation will become less and less. This is the lesson that I would urge; this is the great end of religious emotions. Let it be our care that we turn them to this great account, that we seek to avail ourselves of the strength which comes with them for doing that which God and our consciences require of us.

There are two or three things suggested to us, on which I will observe before I sit down. First of all, see how they err who deprecate all religious excitement; they say,—you have often heard it said,—that it is pure weakness, all that passion about religion.

It is pure weakness. A man may glow with emotion in the conflict of politics, in the pursuit of money, or in the pursuit of pleasure, he may give his heart and soul to these things, his heart may burn within him, he may be on fire, there may be a passion of excitement, and men will look on and perhaps approve of it; but in religion you must be calm and and quiet, sober and rational, it is weakness to be greatly excited, greatly sorrowful, greatly alarmed, to love to a passion, to desire with all the intensity of our nature, it is enthusiasm, fanaticism, extravagance. But what is to move a man, if the realisation to any extent of God and of Christ, of Christ's love, and Christ's cross, and Christ's salvation,—if the realisation to some extent of heaven, and of hell, and of eternity is not to move him to a pitch of intensity? When is it reasonable for a man to feel strongly, to be overcome by his feelings, to be carried away by his emotions, if not when he vividly apprehends the eternal God, and the infinite and loving Saviour, and the mysterious eternity? Oh, it is only reasonable to think that he will be moved by them. He only is the reasonable man who is then intensely moved, and it is the cold and the hardened, while

he thinks of these things; that is unreasonable. It is not only reasonable, but, as we have seen, it is most salutary. Let no one, therefore, depreciate, or sanction (which is perhaps rather commoner) the depreciation of, emotional excitement in connection with religion.

We see, secondly, how they err who make emotional excitement to be of the very substance of their religious life. There are many, I fear, who look upon it as an end, and not as a means, and when they are greatly aroused in their emotions they feel that they have got hold of it, the very life of God,—they are comforted, they are saved. They are very anxious about their sins; they are terrified at the thought of condemnation, whatever it may mean; the world to come becomes a great horror to them; then they hear of Christ giving them eternal life, loving them infinitely and for ever, and giving His own self to death, and giving His life for their salvation, and they are touched. They are penetrated with emotion; their whole soul is stirred up; there is first the anxiety and the terror, and then the delight, and then the joy, then the passionate love to Christ, tears shed for Christ; they are in a state of intense excitement, converted,

saved. Perhaps not—perhaps not; it is a grand mistake to look for the salvation of a man in his emotions, to look for the salvation of a man in any condition of his feelings. A man is not what his feelings are, whatever they may be. You are not what your emotions are, however strong they may be. You are just what your *will* is, and your will finds its expression in your life. A man is a *will*, not a *feeling*. When the feelings become so strong that they determine the will, make the will decide on the side of Christ, then there is conversion, then there is salvation; then, only then. It is when the will turns, when you choose God and righteousness, when the bent of the life goes with God and righteousness, then you are converted and then you are saved.

And there is an unspeakable worth in those strong emotions, because they help to this, but it is not until they secure this that any of us should rest content. I suggest this for your consideration, that you may guard against a danger which I think is common in this day, of looking upon a passionate excitement of feeling as determining a man's salvation. You are what your will is, and your will is shown in the life you are

living. If you are working for Christ and living for righteousness, your soul is living, you are turned to Christ and righteousness.

How great is the advantage in respect of young people. It is so comparatively easy to stir up the emotions of a young boy or girl, and what a blessing that is, when the emotions help to the choosing and the doing of what is right. Oh, young friends, appreciate the advantage of your time of life; it is easier for you to obey than it is for those in middle age; you have far less to contend with than they have, and you have the great help of the susceptibilities and sensibilities of your nature. But do not think that it will always remain thus; the sensibility will become blunter more or less; it will not always be so easy to bring the tear into your eye by setting up Christ on His cross before you; it will not always be so easy, and therefore, you will not always have the help of strong emotions to lead you to Christ; therefore, this is the time to decide, this is the time to give up the will to Christ, this is the time to give up the life to Christ. The season of most favourable impression is the season of most favourable consecration. How sad is the condition of many men who have ceased to feel strongly, who

have ceased to feel at all. They cannot accept Him now. The whole thing is strange to them. They see people at Colston Hall, and at those large halls in London, and it seems strange that the image of Christ, and of the unseen and eternal world, should have such power over the hearts of their countrymen. It is a strange thing to them. They cannot feel. You cannot excite them. There is nothing that is beautiful enough, in any religious idea, in any religious fact, in any religious truth, nothing beautiful enough for them; nothing great enough, nothing grand enough, nothing terrible enough. There is nothing in God, nothing in Christ, nothing in sin, nothing in salvation, nothing in heaven, nothing in hell, nothing in God's universe, nothing in all eternity that can excite them. They are not to be excited, they are not to be moved at all. There are men in Bristol who are past all feeling, and that is the most dreadful condition a human being can be in. It is no use speaking to them, no use; all you can do is to pray for them. With God all things are possible. But that is not our case, I trust, not the case of any one in this assembly; we

can still feel, and feel strongly, and some may be feeling strongly this morning. It may be that there are some here who are feeling the burden of their sin to be intolerable; it weighs on them, it almost crushes them. Make a right use of that feeling, yield to Him, the great burden-bearer, put your faith in Christ and His cross. Some are joyful this morning; they are glad with joy, they are perhaps in a kind of ecstasy of joy, as they think of their relations to God and to heaven. *Use* that joy, and the excitement of it, use it aright. Let it lead you to live a thankful, joyous life in Christ's service. Some are feeling religiously very strongly to-day, perhaps because of hard bereavements which they have undergone; and their sorrows, their affections, their aspirations are drawn heavenward, that is, they are having strong religious emotions. Use these emotions by letting them determine you to choose the next world to this, to choose the kingdom of that world for your kingdom in this world. So may all our emotions be sanctified to us!

May God bless these words!

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.*

ROMANS xiv. 9.

"For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living."

IT is very characteristic of Paul, as of the Scripture writers generally, to associate with the grandest truths of the Christian faith our most common and obvious duties in the world. Examples may be very easily found. He is at one time writing to the Corinthians about the duty of kindness and consideration to the poor; and whence does he derive his reason for urging it?—from nothing less than the abnegation of self on the part of the Son of God. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich." When, at another time, he is writing to the Philippians and

* Preached at Highbury, January 11th, 1874.

exhorting them to think humbly of themselves, and to care not for their own things only, a most ordinary and obvious obligation, where does He go to find a motive strong enough to urge? He goes up to heaven,—to the descent of the Son of God from the ineffable glory to the death of the cross. And again in the text, when he is healing the divisions among men about the differences concerning ritual observances. Some there were among the Christians at Rome, who could not eat of what others with approving conscience freely partook of; some who observed days, some to whom all days were alike; and the two parties were judging and condemning one the other. Paul seeks to lead them to abstain from judging in these matters, and where does he seek for the motive to use? He goes up to the Lord Jesus, in His authority over all. All belonged to Him. To Him he refers the subject-matter in dispute. He inculcates charity in thoughts and in acts towards each other in these ritual observances; he leads them up to the Lord Jesus Christ, as He sits on His throne administering and judging.

Thus it was habitually with the Apostle in the ordinary things of life; he associated them with

the grandest realities of the Christian faith: giving to the poor, with the incarnation and the cross; low estimation of oneself, and sympathy to others, also, with the incarnation and the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ; charity in judging, with the judgment of the supreme Lord of all. Nothing was mean or common in the Apostle's life; nothing was mean or common in the Christian life, according to him; its details were associated with the greatest truths in his faith.

We must have a strong belief in these great verities, and we must give ourselves to the contemplation of them, if we would have them occurring to us as common and obvious motives in life. And how these common and ordinary duties would be exalted, if, after Paul's manner, we could see them in their relation to Christ and God!

I have said, that in urging charity, Paul carries his hearers to the Lord Jesus Christ on His throne. All belonged to Him. He is the Lord of all, the dead and the living.

Let us consider the power which is here ascribed to Christ, and the way in which it was achieved by Him.

First. The power which is here ascribed to

Christ. The statement of the text is true in its application to *all* the dead, and *all* the living, but it is true in its fullest application only to His own people; and it was in this relation that it was here especially asserted by Paul.

What is included, then, in this power over His people, taken in its fullest sense? He is Lord of them dead, and He is Lord of them living.

He is their Lord by reason of (1) the influence which He exerts over them; (2) the divine law of which He is the administrator; (3) the divine care which He exercises over them.

(1) By the influence which He puts forth over them, and through which they derive their affection to Him.

There are some persons who have no right to rule us by external law, but who do rule us. They command our convictions and our affections, and therefore they rule our will. They may be our intimate friends, they may be living persons who know us not, or they may be the dead of whom we know only by report. Deeds are recorded in the histories of their lives which reveal a goodness, a wisdom which commend them to our admiration and love; seeing what we do, we cannot but give

them our allegiance; they mould our character; they shape our life; they change us by the influence which they have over us.

And that is one form of Christ's government. He rules over His people thus. He is so pure, so true, so good, so transcendently beautiful in truth, purity, righteousness, love, that they cannot withhold their confidence. They *must* believe Him, trust Him, love Him, acknowledge His influence over them; they *must* make Him their Lord.

And this holds of the dead as well as the living: nay, more with them than with us. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." They see Him as He is. Before them His glory shines forth with undimmed splendour. Oh, what a sight do they enjoy! What a power is given them! to see Him as He is, and to be endowed with a nature that can fully appreciate Him! Thus we see that their love must be deeper, that their devotion must be more entire, than is possible here. He is theirs; they are His; He is the Lord of their affections.

This is one form of the power of Christ over His people, dead and living.

(2) Again, He has an external sovereignty, to which He has been appointed by God.

With some, Christ is Lord only in the former sense. The life which He lived in that Jewish land, the words which fell from His lips, have not lost their power; they command the beliefs and control the affections of men, and bring them into subjection to Him. But there is nothing beyond this in their belief.

There was something far beyond in the Apostle Paul's doctrine. What does he say here? "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living."

If His rule were only that of influence, He need not have died and lived again. We should have had His words. But the Apostle says it was necessary that He should rise and live again, that He might be Lord of the dead and living. He does not only rule by the influence which has come down the stream of history, but by a personal government. He is now appointed Adminstrator of the Divine law, Pronouncer of the Divine judgments. He rules as sitting externally on the throne of judgment.

And the power He exercises is not only that of the authority of law, but is also derived from

(3) His care of His people.

This element enters into the notion of earthly sovereignty. An earthly ruler has a responsibility as well as rights over his people: he rules over them to render as well as to receive service. And so it is with Jesus Christ. He is set up on the throne of authority, not only that He may rule, but that He may guide and protect the people committed to His charge. God gave them to Him. He received the care of them. He has been raised by the right hand of God to that place, that He might give them repentance and forgiveness of sins, and that Spirit who is the source of wisdom and strength. His it is to give strength in the difficulties, guidance in the intricacies, power in the labours and conflicts of our life.

All through life He has the care of His people; and in death too. His care it is to turn the foe into a friend; to light up the dark valley, and, when that is past, to receive the spirit into His keeping; His to raise, to change, to glorify the body into the likeness of His own, and, thus perfected, to take His own to Himself, to be ever the subjects of His care, while they are the sharers of His glorious destiny.

All this is involved in Christ's lordship. In His care of His people He is lording it over them by His guiding and shielding love.

Secondly. How was this power achieved?

It was necessary that He should humble Himself to the death of the cross before achieving this complex power. It partly consists, as I have said, of influence. How was this influence acquired? Whence did this power over men's hearts come? Under what revelation of Himself did God most win men's devotion? Was it not under that revelation of humiliation and suffering and death? Without suffering, without death, would Christ have gained His power to control men's affections? Suppose Christ had come into this world, clothed Himself with our nature, lived a life as pure as an angel's, and then ascended, without tasting death, to His heavenly throne and glory, He would not move us, win us, make us subject ourselves to what is His will and pleasure, as He does. No, it is by that cross that He conquers our affections. Without that suffering we should not have known how gentle He is, how mild He is, how patient He is, how forgiving He is; we should not have known the irresistible might of His truth and

righteousness; we should not have known how deep and tender, how strong and fathomless His love is. As we see Him suffering and dying on the cross, we see that revelation which carries our convictions to His side, and secures our affections for His service.

The thief saw something in Him, as He hung on the tree, which won him to faith in Him. The heathen centurion had never seen the like before. That man on the cross was greater than Cæsar for the moment, greater than his master on the imperial throne. "Truly," he cried, conquered for the moment, "truly, this man was the Son of God."

And so it has been with all the true followers of Christ in all ages. They have seen in His sufferings and death what has subdued them into love and allegiance.

And again, His influence over the dead also sprang from His death on the cross.

"The Lamb as it had been slain," is what John saw in the midst of the heavenly throne. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing:" that is the song of heaven.

Ah, there is a beauty and a greatness in the Son

of God on the cross which, to judge from the insight into heaven that we gain from the Revelation, is just what draws forth the praise and love of those who dwell there as nothing else does! Christ's power over our love was won by His death.

And it is from the cross, once more, that He gains His actual external sovereignty. It is to this that Paul here refers: "He died, and rose, and revived, that He might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living."

He could not ascend unless He had first descended. His exaltation is the reward of His humiliation. His power now follows on the weakness of the cross. His crown of glory is the reward for His crown of thorns. He "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. *Wherefore*,"—in consideration of that,—"Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted Him." He rules now, *because* He served and became obedient unto death.

But it is God, you say, the great, infinite, eternal God, that rules. Yes, but He rules through this Man. He would help, He would save, He would protect man by man. He would have His purposes for the human race achieved by one of that race.

And He rules through that Man because of that Man's humiliation, suffering, death.

Christ was not born to that throne, but He fought His way to it against sin, death, and all our enemies. He fought all our enemies and conquered them for us; and it is thereby that He became supreme over us.

His honours were won by His sorrows: His power was achieved by submission to weakness. He conquered sin and death by dying Himself. "He died . . that He might be the Lord." Oh, how vast is His dominion! Lord of the dead and of the living! How narrow is every earthly sovereignty compared with His! How is our poor human nature exalted in Him! To what a measureless height has it been raised in Him!

He, though He shared with God in His glory, before the creation of the world, became man, became a little lower than the angels; He took on Him our nature, but then He carried it up to

heaven with Him. Oh, what glorious possibilities to our human nature are revealed!

We may very well be inspired with a certain sense of the grandeur of our nature, of the dignity that we have as men. There are deep responsibilities and there are boundless hopes connected with this nature of ours, for it is the nature possessed by the supreme Lord of the dead and of the living.

And this consideration should affect us in many ways.

First, it should diminish our sense of separation from those who are gone from us.

We are separated from them. Yes, but not utterly. The ties that connected us are broken. Yes, some; but not all. There is one relation which they held to us that they still hold. It is that which springs from the common relation that we all hold to Christ. We are all still of the same kingdom, still acknowledge the same master, still bow to the same laws, still are held by the same hand, still are supported by the same bounty. We are Christ's: they are Christ's. Our common relation to Him still binds us together. We are not so removed from those that we have lost as we

are sometimes apt to think, when we miss the sight of them, and hear the sound of their voices no more. There is none to answer us: they are wholly cut off and lost to us. But it is not so. We are under the same King; we are of the same kingdom; we have the same moral and spiritual laws; we are under the same Divine care and guardianship. Nothing can separate us, and nothing can separate them, from the love of Christ; and therefore nothing can separate us from one another.

And we may well comfort ourselves with these thoughts when we think how utterly those that are gone are lost to our knowledge. How many have we lost during the past year! How many have we lost during all our lives! And we do not know where to look for them, or how to conceive of them. Are we to think of them as in the grave? No; they are perfect spirits; but where are they? Under what outward conditions of life are we to think of them? How are we to conceive of them? We cannot do it: all our attempts at conjecture are vain.

But here is one sense in which they are not lost to us. They are with the Lord. They are the

subjects of His rule; they are held fast by His power; they are bowing at the same throne as we, they are touching the same sceptre as we; they are worshipping the same Lord; they are keeping the same commandments; they are protected by the same supreme laws. Let us comfort ourselves with these things: we are yet one in the love of the Lord for us all.

And, again, let us use these considerations in the relief of our own sorrows.

For when we think of them we sorrow for ourselves. All their sorrow is past: they are supremely blest. "Oh, that we had wings as a dove, then would we flee away," and be as safe as they are to-day. But let it be our comfort, when we almost envy them, that He who gives them rest is as near to us as to them; that He who gives them their security is as pledged to our safety as He is to theirs. We are the subjects of His law just as much as they are. They receive it fully, we only partially; but it is the same law.

This is a comfort to us. That Man, with whose name and with whose life we are so familiar, who went so tenderly about among the poor, the sick, the sorrowing; who would do anything for mankind,

except sin, He has all power over our friends, dead and living.

And, thirdly, in conclusion, these thoughts suggest the preparation for heaven.

If we go to heaven we only go to the kingdom of the Lord, and His kingdom is here, as well as there. When we put faith in Christ, when we yield ourselves to Him, then we enter the kingdom of heaven. Heaven's joy is ours, heaven's laws are obeyed by us, heaven's safety is ours directly we receive Christ.

Bow to this Lord, and you are in the kingdom; for there is one "Lord, both of the dead and of the living." Reject Him, and you put yourself away from the kingdom. Bow to Him, and He becomes answerable for your safety.

May the Spirit of God dispose us all to bow to Christ, and so enter that kingdom of the dead and of the living of which He is the one Lord!

And may He bless these words!

"COME UP HITHER."*

REVELATION iv. 1.

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."

A LITTLE further on in this Book we read, that the two witnesses who for their testimony were slain, are said to have heard a great voice, saying unto them, "Come up hither." I do not want to refer to the occasions on which these voices were heard, nor to the significance of them in their application to the peculiar circumstances of those to whom the summons was addressed, but to the summons as it applies not to these two only, but as it is addressed, in the spiritual application of it, to us all oft-times. The spiritual voice is real. The voices that fall on the spirits of men, the voices that are

* Preached at Highbury Chapel, on Sunday morning, January 31st, 1875.

heard by the ear of the spirit, are not fancies; and voices from heaven fall on the ear of our spirits, which say, "Come up hither." I wish to speak for a little while on these voices, in the hope that some of us may be led to give more heed to them.

First, I observe, there is a voice from the material heaven which calls upon us to "go up thither" to it. The sun and moon and stars, those worlds upon worlds which fill the infinite spaces above us, look down upon us *silently*, as we are accustomed to say; but not in all respects silently. Do they not speak to us in a real sense? Do they not by their beauty and splendour, and grand order, and glorious functions—do they not speak to us? Do they not arrest our attention, and do they not invite our contemplation? Can you help understanding them, as they are spread out before you, to say, "Behold us, think of us, and dwell in thought and feeling with us? 'Come up hither.'" And we can go up there in our thought and in our feeling. Bound down as we are to this little spot of earth in our physical nature, we are not bound down here in our spiritual nature; our minds can go upward; they can

travel up to the visible heavens far swifter than the light. And why are those heavens, those stars, worlds so great and grand, without number, spread open to our gaze, but that they may draw our attention upward to them? Can you help understanding them as meaning, when they speak, "Let not your souls cleave to the dust?" Do not be lying down there grovelling in your thoughts on that small spot of earth. Come up hither in your thoughts and in your affections. And it would be wiser in us, and far better for us, if we more frequently gave heed to that voice of the visible heaven. This world of ours is but a unit in the midst of innumerable hosts of worlds. We call it, indeed, the great globe, but, as compared with those stupendous worlds above us, it is a very little thing; it dwindles quite into insignificance. How unspeakably insignificant, then, must be this little spot on this little globe. How unspeakably insignificant, in comparison with what we see above us, must that spot be to which is limited our bodily nature, with its interests and its movements. And if our spiritual nature, too, be limited to it; if our thoughts and affections be limited to this little physical sphere of our body, our spiritual nature,

too, becomes correspondingly insignificant: we sink into very little things, just as we confine our spiritual nature to the little sphere of our bodily existence; for the Scripture proverb holds in this case, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." As a man's thought is, so is he. If his thought be all about the things in the sphere of his bodily existence; if his thought be confined to this infinitesimally small sphere, he becomes, thereby, himself an infinitesimally small creature. It is as he gets away from this sphere; it is as he flies away on the wing of his thought, which carries him swifter than the light into the universe of God; as he ascends upwards and lives, or roams among the limitless spaces where those worlds above him dwell; as he, dwelling in his thought, *there*, looks upon this dim spot which is called earth, and upon this little sphere in which his body moves here—it is then that he rises in his nature, in his thoughts, in his feelings, in his aims, in his pursuits. It is then he sees how very petty are the things of this earthly sphere. He becomes so much greater than they by looking upon them from that height, and amid that magnificence. He sees the things to be very little; he will

scarcely, after looking at them from that distance, be moved by the little things here, as he was moved before. He will see that they are not worth all the care which he has been expending upon them. Have we not, most of us, had an experience something after this manner? We have lived on months and months, and, it may be, year after year, lived, and toiled, and troubled ourselves with the objects that surround us in our little material sphere. We have occupied ourselves almost entirely with the small persons and the small things with which we have to do in our physical sphere. They have engrossed nearly all, if not quite all, our thought, having become of supreme importance in our eyes; they have become supremely great to our feeling; we have reduced ourselves to their dimensions, become infinitesimally small in our cares, and thoughts, and aims, and pursuits, and interests, and fellowships. But it happened, after a while, that we left home, that we withdrew and left them all, and then occupied, for some considerable time, our thoughts and feelings with the scenes and multitudes, perhaps, of the great metropolis of our land. We became busy with its great life and vast occupations; or

we crossed, it may be, the sea, and lived for awhile amid the splendour and marvels of great foreign capitals; or, we delighted ourselves in the beauty of nature in some of her grandest scenes. Did we not, then, as we looked back upon our little home, feel that it became very little in our eyes? Did not the little things look little—the little cares, the little joys? Did not we call ourselves very foolish? Did not we feel that we were almost childish that we allowed this very little trouble in our home circle, and those very trifling cares, to magnify themselves as they had done? Looking on them far away, amidst great and grand things, they dwindle down into the littleness of their true proportions. And so it may be, and to some extent will be, if, with the lightning speed of thought, we accustom ourselves to live much away from the little material sphere, obey that voice from the material heaven which tells us to go up and live there, in thought and feeling, amid that beauty and grandeur. Then, as we shall be looking down upon this little dim earth, and upon the little circle of our daily existence, we shall feel that these little things are very little indeed; we shall cease, to some extent,

to exaggerate and magnify trifles; we shall feel our nature to be far larger than the things around us. It cannot very well be otherwise. If we do really allow our thoughts to go upward and heavenward, and roam about through the great material universe of God, it cannot but be, taking in in this way something of its vastness, realising something of its immensity,—it cannot but be, if we thus go upward, and about that material heaven, that we shall be at least somewhat less in the power of these little people and little things, and live less for them, be less moved by them, be, for our peace and happiness, more independent of them. It is wise, I say, and it would be good for us, if we gave more heed to the voice from the visible heaven which says, "Come up hither."

But there is a voice of deeper significance which comes to us from the *invisible* heaven, bidding us go up thither. There is somewhere a sphere where the great God dwells, by the manifestation of His glorious nature, more fully than He does in the beauty, and grandeur, and order, and functions of His material universe. There is a sphere somewhere, where He makes the fullest revelation of Himself: *there*, is the invisible

heaven. There is a sphere where Christ, in His human personality, is now living in supreme glory and felicity: *there*, wherever it is, is the invisible heaven. There is a sphere where angels, multitudes past all counting, beings whose nature and experience have never been tainted with evil, are shining and serving in the presence of the glory of God and of Christ: *there* is the invisible heaven. There is a sphere where the good from all the past generations of mankind are gathered together; where many familiar to us once, but lost to us here, are now found: *there, there,* is the invisible heaven.

There must be such a sphere somewhere; good men have always felt there must be. All men, all men who have been moved by other instincts than the mere animal, earthly instincts of their nature, have felt that there must be somewhere, in the universe of the perfect God, a sphere like Himself, in its essential perfection, and when they have yielded to their spiritual instincts at all, have tried to believe that there was such a sphere, have tried to look forward with hope to it; but it is only Jesus of Nazareth, Christ our Lord and Saviour, who has

furnished ground strong and clear for believing that there is such a sphere. As our belief is in Him, so is our belief in the reality of this heavenly sphere. We are sure of it, just as we are sure of Christ's truth. Let us be slow, therefore, to suffer anyone to undermine our confidence in the truth of His word. As we are sure of Him, we are sure of this invisible heaven. We do not know where to look for its local habitation, but it does not the less surely exist to us. We cannot the less for that enter into it by this mysterious power of thought, through which we are able to go up to the material heaven, and abide there, amid those great spaces and glorious worlds. We, by this mysterious power of thought, can enter in a moment into the invisible heaven, and dwell there in thought, and feeling, and desire, and aim, and hope, and pursuit, and fellowship. We can, if we will, *now*, in all these respects, be there, and the voice says, "Come up hither;" and it is the voice of God that is revealed there: it is the voice of Christ, it is the voice of the holy angels, it is the voice of the perfected spirits, it is the voice of spirits which we once knew whilst they were spirits in the flesh. These voices may be heard. They are

silent to the sense, but they speak to the ear of the spirit. Just as the stars are silent to the senses, and yet have a voice which the spirit can hear, bidding it go up to them, so these living spirits in the heavenly sphere are silent to the senses, but they speak to the spirit, and can be heard.

Why should they be revealed to us, but that we may look up to them? Why should Christ have disclosed that heaven where God is, and He Himself is, and the angels abide, and the glorious spirits? Why are they there, but that we may look to them; but that we may think about them? Do they not by the fact of the revelation of them, just as these earthly heavens by the fact of their revelation, say to us now, "Behold us, think of us, come up to us, come and dwell with us? You are down there in the body, but come in the spirit, come thus up to us. Come and live, in your thoughts, and aims, and desires, and affections, and fellowships—come and live with us. That is, come and be heavenly-minded: it is the same thing. Have your mind in heaven—be heavenly-minded. 'Come up hither,' and live with us."

"Oh," some will say, "that is very easily told; but it's very hard to do." It seems to them

perhaps, an unreasonable demand; but it is clearly what is required of us in the New Testament Scriptures, not less than by those silent voices of heaven: what do we read? "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." "Set your affections not on things on the earth, but on things in heaven." "Let your conversation"—your daily life—"be"—where? —"in heaven." To meet this requirement is distinctly set forth as the mark of the truly regenerate soul. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit"—who have the spiritual mind, who are born of God — they "mind heavenly things;" they live in their mind in heaven. It is not so hard as to be unreasonable; it is clearly what is required of us, and it is not unreasonable.

Just consider for a moment. Suppose that there were somewhere a land beyond the seas to which we were destined to emigrate, we knew not how soon; it may be next year, it may be this year, it may be next week, it may be to-morrow. It is a fairer land than this, a sunnier clime, peopled by a purer, holier, happier race than surrounds us here. If we were destined — we knew not how

soon—for emigration to that land, should we not be thinking about it often and much? Should we not be living in the anticipation of it? Should we not be feeling already that it was *our* land; that it was our home? Would not our thoughts and our hopes be there as in our home? Well, that is the land that is before every Christian man. A land fairer than this, a sunnier land, a happier, purer land. He knows not when the summons may come to leave actually and personally this world for that land. Is it such a hard thing to require of him that he should think a great deal about it, that he should be anticipating it, that he should be now very often going into the midst of that land in imagination, that he should be holding spiritual fellowship with its people? It is surely what he cannot help doing. It is not hard. It is not unreasonable to require of us, who hope that we are born of heaven, who believe that heaven is to be our eternal home, who expect to be with God, and Christ, and the angels, and all the spirits from earth perfected from sin—it is not an unreasonable thing to require of us, that we should often go up in thought thither and be much there; it is not an unreasonable demand.

And think how it would serve us, if we did this in the varied conditions and experiences of need through which we pass in this life. We are often burdened with a sense of our moral imperfections. We groan under the weight of that burden. The evil seems everywhere about us. It seems to run through everything; we have sought deliverance from it, but in vain. Here it is permeating our experiences and activities. We have struggled, and have failed; and there seems no prospect of any better result to future conflicts with it. The battle has gone against us, and it seems as though it would still go against us; so we feel that we are debased in our nature through this evil; we almost lose hope of the victory which is found in perfection. Then is the time to listen to that voice which comes from heaven, saying, "Come up hither." If we, burdened with our imperfections and sins, obey that voice and go up there, what do we find there? Why, we find that all the divine and higher forces of heaven are against our sin, and upon our side, when we are fighting here against it. We find there spirits made perfect, who fought once as we do now. We find that the arm which conquered for them is working for us;

that the fountain in which they were cleansed, and made so white, is open to us, and that our garments, too, may one day be seen as white as theirs; and so we are re-animated in our hopes, and come back stronger for the conflict with evil.

We are living here in a corrupt age. There is a spirit of evil all through the society in which we live: the maxims, opinions, habits, of multitudes all around us with whom we have to do, are quite against our progress in the divine and godly life. We are beset by evil, corrupt examples, which ever tend to assimilate us to themselves. We, from our very nature, tend to become like those with whom we hold constant social relations, and we are debased through our social relations. We are, many of us, in social relation with those, the whole tendency of whose spirit is to beget in us worldliness, and selfishness, and covetousness, and ungodliness. All around us, in the example that is set before us, in the influence of our social relations and intercourse, we want help. We want the help of man, of a holy intercourse; but, instead of that help, we too often find hindrances to our souls in the men and the women around us with whom we have to do, and we are ready

sometimes to despair, for we feel that we are giving way to this antagonistic influence to which we are exposed. Then is the time to hear the voice which comes from heaven, saying, "Come up hither." In your thoughts come up hither—in your fellowships. Here the atmosphere is all pure. Here the fellowship is only with the holy and with the loving. Here there is nothing that defileth, but everything that sanctifieth. Come, and be in your spirit among us daily, in your imaginations with us. Come, and hold fellowship with us, with God, with Christ, with the angels, with the spirits, with those whom you once knew—come, and hold fellowship with them. Communing with God, with Christ, with the holy angels, with the perfected spirits in thought and feeling, we cannot help being to some extent, and in proportion as we commune with them, inspired by their example; we cannot help catching their tone; we cannot help receiving upon the face of our souls their bright and holy light; we cannot help—being much in communion of spirit with them—becoming like them. Here is one counteraction to the demoralising influence of the evil associations to which we are bound in our earthly life. We are wearied, it may be, of

the discord of that life. There is strife in many a home, if not in our own home; and outside the family circle, in a large social sphere, what a battle is ever being waged. What bitter contest is ever going on between classes, between capital and labour, between the rich and the poor, between masters and servants: there is ceaseless contention. How the political controversy is raging, and the ecclesiastical controversy. The Churches of Christ are fighting with one another as much as they fight with the world. The battle which they wage against each other seems certainly at times a fiercer one than the battle which they are waging with the world and with sin; and some of us are at times weary of the family strife, the social strife, the political strife, the ecclesiastical strife. This sound of war ever falling on the ear has worn us out; we sigh for peace. It is then we should listen to the voice that comes through that open door of heaven, "Come up hither." There is no contention in that kingdom; there is no party strife in that Church; there is no discord in that family. We go up there from amid the scene of tumult and war, and find that it is all truth, and all love, all peace, all rest, for ever.

We are weighed down, it may be, with a burden of disappointment, and sorrows, and cares, and fears. Things in our domestic or in our social relationships, or in our personal activities, go awry, or seem to be altogether against us, and there is nothing in the present, and no prospect before us, but what is dark, there is nothing to comfort and cheer us as we look back, and there is nothing before us that makes anticipation much worth while, and so we are sad, and perplexed, and ready to be impatient, and to complain that things should be ordered so. "Come up hither," we hear the voice from heaven saying; and if we obey that voice, we find ourselves in the midst of a sphere where there is no pain, or sorrow, or fear, and as we look down in the light of that world upon our pains, and cares, and sorrows, down here on earth, we cease to be perplexed; we are no longer impatient, we are not permitted to complain. For, looking on earth amid the light of heaven, and from the midst of it, we see that the suffering of this present life is all part of the discipline necessary to prepare us for that world which is as free from sorrow as it is free from sin. Amid the turmoil and suffering of life, it is good

to be there for a while in thought, and good to be hoping to be there for ever.

We are mourning the departed. Nothing can ever make up for their loss; we have lost them, and we mourn with bitter sorrow; perhaps, the time for tears has passed, and the sorrow is to be lifelong. They are lost, quite lost to us in this life. "Come up hither,"—"come up hither,"—says the voice; and we go, and we find them there, and would not have them back again.

Or, we are troubled as we look forward to the inevitable end of our own life. We shrink from death, from the grave. We listen to the voice of death, and the grave seems to speak to us. But there we are wrong; we should not be looking forward, but looking upward. We should not be listening to that voice that comes from death, from the grave below, but to that other voice which comes from heaven, and says, "Come up hither."

Thus, we shall become strong, and comforted, under the discipline of life, in all its varied conditions and experiences; and then, by and by, there will come a voice from heaven to us in quite another form from that which we have been considering, and with quite another meaning

attached to it—a voice from God will come to us. When the fatal disease has taken hold upon us, when the decay of nature has advanced, so that it is hastening to dissolution, then the voice may be heard, saying, "Come up hither." It will be the voice of God in His providence. That is the meaning of that mortal disease, that is the meaning of that slow but sure decay, that is the meaning as He touches you. He is really saying, "Come up hither." And we shall be ready to go, —or at least not find it very difficult to go;—go actually, personally, in the entireness of our spiritual personality, if we are accustomed now to go often in thought. That is the great preparation for death—to be so living now in heaven, that when the summons comes we shall be going to a place that is become, to a large extent, a familiar place to us. Become acquainted with God; become familiar with Christ; make it your habit to be in heaven; accustom yourself to be with Him in fellowship with those spirits; be oftener there with the spirits; live much there, and then, when the voice says, "Come up," through the disease, or the decay, it is not likely you will be very loath to go. It has long been the home of

your thoughts; you will not dread to go home. I have heard persons whom I believed not unprepared for the departure to that heavenly world, saying—when it was spoken of to them—saying, "Oh, but this world, and all the people in it, are so real, and all that world is so shadowy." The invisible God, the invisible Christ, the angels, the spirits that were once clothed with flesh, they are shadowy, unsubstantial: they cannot realise it; it is so strange, unsubstantial. And I have thought sometimes that they found it so difficult then, because they had not been accustomed to go there in their thoughts and affections. Had their conversation been in heaven, had they had much fellowship with Christ, been with the angels and their friends in heaven, instead of with these so much poorer friends on earth, then when the summons came to go there it would not have all been so shadowy and unsubstantial as they said it was. And the way to get ready to go is to be heavenly-minded. Live much in thought in that heavenly sphere; and then it will not seem a long way, or a very shadowy, strange way to go, when the last word of God to us on earth is spoken,—"Come up hither."

THE THINGS UNSEEN.*

JOHN xx. 29.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

I MUST begin this morning by making a personal allusion. Some three years ago or more, I addressed this congregation upon the words which I have just now read. I have been requested to repeat what I then said, and I meant to do it some morning. I certainly did not mean to do it this morning; I meant to have addressed you upon some subject which bore upon the claims of that institution whose interests are more particularly before our minds. But last week, and especially yesterday and Friday, through the state of my health, I gave up all idea of being able to appear in this place at all this morning, and therefore gave up all thought of making any preparation

* Preached at Highbury, October 24th, 1875.

for this service. So, you see, I am of necessity thrown back upon some old train of remark. I trust it will not, on this account, be uninteresting, or less instructive. It will not be altogether what I said before, but very much, of necessity, the same. I am bound to say as much in justice to myself and to those whose memories may dimly go back three years, and remember that something of the same kind that I am going to speak was then addressed to them.

Let me now refer to the text. We are all familiar with the interesting and instructive portion of the sacred narrative in which the words are found. The Apostle Thomas, you will remember, was not present with the disciples when the risen Lord first appeared to them, and when the fact was told to him he was utterly incredulous. He would not on any account believe it. "It must have been some one else, or some phantom, that appeared to them," he protested, in his unbelief, and he said that he never would believe in anyone who appeared before him as his Lord, unless he could see in His hands the mark of the nails, and should be permitted to put his finger in the prints of the nails, and thrust his hand into His side. You know what

followed afterwards, on the occasion of the Lord's second appearance to His disciples. Thomas was then present, and he was allowed to do that which he insisted upon doing as the condition of his believing. His Master said to him, "Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side."

How very different the Lord's treatment of the honest doubter from the treatment which the honest doubter has so often met from the followers of Christ. How hard the Church has often been to those who could not honestly accept what was honestly believed! How hard the Church has been! How tender the Master was! Let me, in this respect, fall into the hands of the Lord; let me not fall into the hands of man.

Thomas could not resist the evidence now presented to him. That must be his Master that stands before him. Those are the tones of His voice. It is only He that could so bid him to put his finger into the prints of the nails, and thrust his hand into the pierced side. His unbelief was conquered. "My Lord," he said, "and my God." He believed at last. It was well. But it would have been much better if he had believed at first,

and on the testimony of his fellow-disciples—better for his own peace and comfort, better a great deal as furnishing a higher example, and better, as it would have shown a much better mind. For it does not, as some have imagined, it does not show strength of mind, but weakness, it does not show greatness of mind but littleness, to be sceptical in the face of adequate evidence; and this is what the Lord taught His disciples. He was very gentle with him, but there was a mild reproof in His very gentle words; He was faithful to him in His tenderness; He gave the doubting disciple to understand that he had really lost something through his unbelief. "Because thou hast seen Me," He said to him, "thou hast believed." Therefore He said he had lost a higher blessedness: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

We are called to believe in the things which are not seen. Dwelling, as we do, in these bodies of ours—dependent, as we are, in a very great degree, upon our bodily senses, and for our knowledge generally, we find it much easier to believe in things that appeal to our senses. Things which are seen are, to most men, the real things, and the important things. They believe in them, they

trust them, they love them, they live for them. But the things which are unseen,—they are very unsubstantial and shadowy. It is hard to believe in them, hard to trust in them, difficult to live for them. This, however, is what we have all got to do, if we would be, in Christ's judgment, truly blessed.

And what are those things unseen which we are all required to believe. They are, among others, the four following, and pre-eminently the four following:—First, the moral laws of our nature, or Conscience; secondly, God; thirdly, Christ; fourthly, Heaven. I mention these four realities, not, of course, as exhaustive, but as of supreme importance, and I have mentioned them in the order in which I have given them because they stand thus connected as objects of our faith, because belief in the first leads to and renders necessary belief in the second, and belief in the second leads to and renders necessary belief in the third, and belief in the third leads to and renders necessary belief in the fourth.

And first among the unseen things, I mention the moral laws. These we find written upon our spiritual nature. We find them in what we call our consciences. They speak to us of the right and

of the wrong. They tell us what, in its fundamental element, is the right. They do not tell us what is the right in its applications to the details of our life; we must learn that by knowledge and experience. But they tell us, these primary laws of our nature, what, in its fundamental principle, is the right that we should do and the wrong that we should avoid. They tell us that we should be true; they tell us that the true is right, that the false is wrong; they tell us that the pure in mind and action is right, that the impure is wrong. They tell us that justice in our transactions is right, that injustice is wrong. They tell us that to be pitiful, humane, helpful to one another is right; they tell us that to be hard and selfish is wrong. And they tell us to choose the right and to do it, and to avoid the wrong at all costs and hazards, and intimate to us with sufficient distinctness that it will be well with us if we do the right, and ill with us if we do the wrong.

These laws we find within. We look into ourselves, and they are there, written in our nature. We listen, and we hear their voices. They are great and strong and necessary in the moral sphere, as are the natural laws in the material sphere.

Great and strong are those *material* laws. They include the greatest thing and the least thing under their control. They hold together and maintain in their wonderful order the vast countless worlds throughout the whole creation, whilst, at the same time, the flowers under our feet are subject to their rule. Great and grand are the laws of the material creation, and most necessary. Suspend their action, blot them out of existence, and there is an end of all order and beauty and enjoyment, an end of all life in the universe outside us. And belief in them is necessary, because, if you believe in them you know what shall be on the morrow—because, if you believe in the natural laws you know what will be in the next hour; you know what to do, and what not to do, in respect to the natural world, just because you believe in the permanence of those natural laws.

Now, I observe that the laws we find written upon our nature, the laws of the moral sphere, are great and strong and necessary as are these material laws, great and strong as the laws which hold the stars. They are as grand, and grander, because the spiritual is grander than the material. And they are as necessary. Stay their action, blot them out

of existence, let there be no more of these laws leading anywhere for the right, and there is panic and confusion in the moral world, there is an end of all beauty and happiness, of all moral and spiritual life. And belief in them, too, is as necessary as belief in the natural laws affecting the material. You do not believe in the natural laws? then you do not believe that the sun will rise to-morrow, you do not believe that the harvest will reward you for the labour of sowing; you do not know what to do, you do not know what not to do, you do not know what to expect. The want of faith in the natural laws paralyses you, and leaves you to go on blindly and uncertainly. And so belief in the moral laws we find within us is indispensable. Withdraw all belief in them, and we do not know whether to do right, or whether to do wrong; we do not know which is wisest, which is safest, which is best, the right or the wrong. You are left to follow blindly your own inclinations when you have lost faith in the moral laws of your conscience.

Now, some men have lost faith in these laws. They have so neglected them, that the distinction which they make between right and wrong has become very faint, and has, in some cases, become

quite obliterated. They have so violated them, they have so hardened themselves against the laws of their own moral nature, that they are deaf now to what those laws prescribe, to what they promise, to what they threaten. They are, morally speaking, all at sea; they are on the sea of life, without compass and without any guide, have nothing to direct them—having ceased to put confidence in these moral laws—but their own inclinations and passions. We need to be cautioned against everything that tends to impair our confidence in these laws, against doing anything that tends to impair the distinction which they make between right and wrong, against everything that leads us to question them or doubt them. Be sure, dear hearers, that scepticism has achieved its last and its most disastrous triumph when it leads you to question the reality and the worth of those moral laws within you which plead for the right and against the wrong. Let it not achieve that triumph over you; let not scepticism enter into your moral sphere. Whatever you doubt, do not doubt the voice within your own selves, do not doubt your conscience, do not doubt your own nature. Believe in yourselves. I am not asking you now to believe in priests, or to believe in

Churches, not to believe in the Bible even, not to believe in Christ, not to believe in God, but to believe in that sovereign nature within yourselves. Believe in your conscience. Cherish, as a sacred thing, your faith in your moral nature. Believe in yourselves.

I observe, secondly, that God is a great unseen reality, in which it is of the supremest importance that we should believe. And believing the laws of our conscience, of which I have been speaking, should lead to belief in God, and almost always does lead to belief in God. The laws imply a law-giver. These laws within us should directly lead us to believe in a law-giver. For whence came these laws within us, that speak to us from the beginning of right or wrong? Who made them? They did not make themselves,—that is a simple absurdity. If they are laws to our comprehension, as they are, if they address us as laws, they must be the laws of some one. And of whom? Who was he that conceived them? Who wrote them on our nature? Who speaks to us in them? Who works by them? Whence came these laws we find written upon our nature? Whence came they? From men? No doubt we have been accustomed to hear them

addressed to us from the lips of men from our childhood upwards, but then they did not come to us with the force of moral laws from the lips of men, but as they came from within; and now, if men were to be silent about them, if men were to deny them, if all around us were to contradict them, we should find them within us, still asserting themselves, prescribing, threatening, promising. They have clearly an origin and an existence independent of men around us. Did they come, then, from ourselves? Did we devise them and lay them down as laws for our guidance and self-government? That cannot be, because they spring up from our nature, without our will. We looked within, and we found them there. No sooner did we look to see, and were called to think and act, than, looking within, we found there these laws bidding us do the right and avoid the wrong. No man looked within, with the eye of reason and of reflection, without finding them there already. We did not make them, clearly. They were made for us. Yet, if they are laws, they could not make themselves, and as they were not made by men around us, and were not made by ourselves, who could have made them, who could have put them into our nature, so that,

directly it developed itself, they developed themselves too? Who could have put them there but He who made our nature as it is?

If we believe in these laws, we must believe in the great Law-giver, God. And belief in the laws not only demands that we should believe in Him, but that we should believe in the great attributes of His character. If we come to look at these moral laws, we find that they are intelligent laws, that there is the highest wisdom in them, that there is the truest reason in them, and we must believe that He, whose laws they are, is the impersonation of reason and of wisdom. We find they are all laws on the side of righteousness, and we must conclude that He, whose laws they are, is a righteous God. They are all laws that are good in their nature, and in their tendency. They seek our good, and they seek everybody's good. He whose laws they are must care for us, and must care for everybody else. And we find, moreover, that these laws are not only local, or partial, or limited. We find that they are universal. We find this, that what they say to be in its nature right, we can see to be right in all places, and at all times, and in all worlds, and through all eternity. We can see that these laws

are laws which reach to the infinite, and which go on to eternity. We must conclude, therefore, that He whose laws they are, is one to whose authority, and whose will, and whose power, no limits are known, but who reaches on to the infinite and the eternal.

And we are not only required by our reason to believe in the laws of the Law-giver, but we require Him in our hearts. The affections require a law-giver as well as the laws. In this material universe, is it not to your hearts very dreary and terribly hard, when you allow yourselves to think of it, as some philosophers would have you do, as originated and sustained altogether by laws—laws without a law-giver? How desolate does the vast family of living things all over the universe appear to our hearts, when we think of it as without a head, without a Father, bound down by laws in which it originated. It is just so in the moral sphere. It is hard and desolate to the heart to think of moral laws without a law-giver; righteous laws they are, wise, good, but the heart wants a righteous, wise, and good law-giver. The heart cannot rest in a *thing;* it wants a *person.* It cannot be satisfied with laws; it wants a law-giver to comprehend and

trust, and adore and love. The heart will pass through laws to the great Law-giver. The heart thirsteth after God, after the living God.

Christ was the third invisible reality which I mentioned, and in which it is of the utmost importance we should believe. There is belief in the moral laws required, and belief in the Law-giver. So belief in God the Law-giver requires belief in Christ, makes belief in Christ necessary, —necessary to mediate between us and God. And there are two grounds for this necessity. First, the limitation of our faculties makes the infinite and absolute spiritual Being an overwhelming mystery to us. We none of us can, with the eye of our minds, look directly on God's being, and say what it is there is before us. Consider it. We call Him the pure Spirit, self-existent, without beginning, without end, infinite, eternal, and so on. But when you try to get through these words at what they mean, what is it that lies behind them? I ask you to try and give an account to yourselves of what that is which lies behind these words—a pure Spirit, illimitable, self-existent, without beginning, without end. What is that? What do you conceive of it? What is

God? Where is He? How does He exist? How can He, infinite and eternal, think and feel? Do not you feel oppressed when you gaze at Him, and sometimes overwhelmed? Does it not make your brain ache to gaze much at Him, and try to give an account of Him to yourselves? Is He not the mystery of all mysteries, this God? A conception of Him we never can form, for the finite never can truly form a conception of the infinite. But when you think of Him, do not you feel that you want some one to represent Him, that you want some one to get between your understandings and Him, so that, by looking at this representative, you may form some conception of Him?

Now, that has been the want of all human beings in the world, and that explains, very largely, the idolatry of all history. The Uncreated Spirit, illimitable, unoriginated, without end,—what could those poor heathen children of the dust, clothed with clay, make out of Him? What account could they give to themselves of Him? He dwelt in light that was wholly inaccessible to them. They wanted something to represent Him. They wanted something which they could see, and understand, and of which they could say, "That is like Him; that

is like God." And they said to the sun, "That shall be for God;" and then to the moon, and then to the stars, and then to some man, and then to some creature of the air. And then they fashioned something with their own hands, and said, "Be that instead of Him," a symbol of Him, a representative of Him, so that we may form a conception of Him, such as will enable us to approach Him. *That is largely the origin of* idolatry.

God has provided for this want of man. God knew from the beginning that, with our capacities, we never should get at a direct knowledge of Him, and therefore He gave a representative of Himself; He gave a likeness of Himself. He impressed something of His own image upon His creation; He impressed His image upon man; He came out of the mysterious places of His existence, and put so much of His character upon man, that, looking upon man, we should be able to look upon God, and conceive of Him. If man had been as God had made him, in his faculties and in his character, there would have been so much of God seen in him, of God's nature in his pure spirit, of God's truth, and righteousness, and love, that, looking at

man, we should have been able to form some conception of what God was. Unfallen humanity would have been so God-like, that we should have wanted no help of our understandings at all to conceive of God apart from it. Looking to that humanity, it would be helping us on to a true conception of the Divinity. But humanity fell away from God; the faculties of man were impaired; his nature was soiled; the tendencies of his heart became evil; his life became wrong; so that, looking upon him, looking upon man, we could no longer form a right conception of God.

And if it was still necessary that we should have an image and representative of God, some other than humanity must be provided; and another was provided—a man again—the second Adam—sent from heaven. The Word was made flesh, and appeared again in a Man, and in a perfect Man. See what that Man can say: "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." He said, indeed, also, "The Father is greater than I;" that is, there is more in God than can be revealed in perfect humanity. But that which could be revealed in perfect humanity was revealed in Him, so that, looking to Him, His nature, His spirit, His life,

you see what God is, you have the image of God, which helps you to form a true conception of what God is. I ask questions about God to which no answer can be given. I try to conceive of the Infinite Spirit, but there is no shape or form before my mind. I am told that He is everywhere; He seems to be nowhere. When my mind would apprehend Him, He vanishes. There is no substance, no essence that I can lay hold of; I am oppressed and overcome with the mystery. I want some one to mediate between my understanding and Him; so to represent Him that, by looking at the representative, I may form a conception, adequate to my present circumstances, of Him; that is, I want Christ. I look to Christ as the image of God. I understand Him. There is a nature and form before my mind. He has a spirit like my own; He thinks and feels as I do. Is that the image of God? Is that the true representative of God? I can understand Him, and therefore I can conceive, adequately for my present circumstances, of God Himself. Is He the very image of God? Did God feel pity after that manner? Did God give up, in the service of men, after that manner? Does God look at me with the pity that

is in those eyes? Does God speak to me in the tone, and with the love, that is in those words? Does God work by those hands? Does God live that life among men? Is that God manifested in the flesh? Does that Man represent to me the Infinite, the Eternal? I can understand that Man. The image is distinct, definite, intelligible to me; and if He is to stand for the incomprehensible God, I have some conception of Him.

There is a second ground for the necessity of belief in Christ, if we believe in God,—the ground which arises from the fact of sin. Belief in the laws necessitates a belief in the Law-giver. But we have broken those laws. We have done wrong. We have been doing it, more or less, all through life. And how shall we stand before the laws? How stand before the Law-giver? How escape all the natural consequences of the violation of His laws? How escape all the natural consequences of the wrong which we have done? God will pardon us, it will be said, God will pardon us and deliver us from our sin. How do we know that He will? How can we be sure of that? He is kind and merciful in His nature; but then, I see that, although He is kind and merciful, the

violations of His law follow men in their consequences to the end of this life, and how can I know that they will not follow them, in their consequences, into the other life, and far on—I cannot tell how far. How do I know that they will not? He is kind and merciful, and I see these consequences allowed to follow the wrong done to the end of life: how do I know that they will not follow men into the life to come? I want to know; I want some one to tell me; I want some one that has authority in his words to tell me that I can escape, that I can be delivered from all the penalties of the wrong that I have done, and from the wrong itself. And that is just saying, in other words, that I want Christ. Believing in God, I must believe in Christ. He gives me the assurance of God's forgiving love and mercy; He gives me the assurance that He died for the remission of my sin; He gives me the assurance that His blood can cleanse me from all sin, and that He will intercede for me, the transgressor. When I have faith in the laws and in the Law-giver, I want faith like that in Christ.

When Sir James Macintosh was on his death-bed, his daughter, who was sitting by his bed-side,

saw that he had been, for an hour or so, in very profound thought, and at last she ventured to break the silence, and to ask him whether he was happy; and he turned upon her his dying eyes, and said, "I believe," and seemed incapable of saying more, when she added, "in God?" and he quickly responded, "in Christ." That distinguished philosopher and speculatist on the highest things in the long years of his life, felt that, as he stood upon the threshold of eternity, he must believe not only in the Infinite Spirit, but in Christ, as the revelation of His love and of His mercy.

And, dear hearers, if you sit down, and silently think, and listen to the voice of God speaking to you in those laws of your conscience which you know you have broken times without number, you will then feel that you need here to listen to the voice of Christ, too, speaking to you of the forgiving mercy of God.

Once more. Heaven, the great reality of the unseen, should be the object of our faith. When there is belief in God and belief in Christ, belief in Christ renders necessary belief in heaven. For if you believe in the living Christ at all, why, you must believe that He is somewhere, that He is

living somewhere; and you must believe also that that must be a very glorious place in which He lives. His presence would glorify any world. Righteousness must reign where He lives. All must be very pure there; all must be very secure and very peaceful. That sphere must be full of love; it must be very beautiful, very happy, that world where He is. We sometimes say we know very little about heaven, but we know a great deal when we have strong faith in Christ as living, for He can gather around Him all the elements of blessedness to which I have now referred. To believe in Christ is to believe in heaven, for He makes heaven the place where He lives. To die is to depart and be with Christ. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord."

That was enough for the great Apostle of the Gentiles, and he knew that the presence of Christ would purify, consecrate, beautify, glorify, make a heaven of, the place where He dwelt. And you and I, dear hearers, need belief in heaven. Why, what has become of all the great and the good of past ages, if there is no world at all where they now dwell? What is to sustain you under the memory of those whom you have loved and lost, if

you have no faith in a higher and a better world than this? How bear up under the pressure of this world's affliction? How bear up under the burden of this world's sin and sorrow, without any faith at all in a better world? And how leave this world at last with any peace and comfort, without any faith in a better world? If you have faith in a living Christ, that carries with it, of necessity, belief in heaven.

Believe in these four unseen things. The laws of your own nature: then, believing in yourselves, you are led to believe in God, the Law-giver; and then you are required to believe in Christ, the Revealer of God; and then in the heavenly sphere. These are realities, and the things that are seen are shadows: although it is otherwise frequently in our estimate, this is the truth. The unseen are the real; the seen are unreal shadows. Your wealth is a shadow; your distinctions in society are shadows; and your pleasures are shadows. Those very heavens that look so solid, as if they must last for ever, they are shadows; and all the pomp and splendour of this earth are shadows; and the earth itself is a shadow. I call them all shadows for two reasons. First, there is not in them all the

satisfying substance which your nature and mind require. Get them to the utmost extent possible, possess them as you may, and enjoy them in the highest conceivable measure, you will yet find that they do not satisfy—not your reason, not your conscience, not your convictions. These will all, after a while, throw them off; they want the satisfying substance.

And I call them shadows, too, because they pass away. By and by—very soon—we shall all be missing them. The wealth, the honour, the pleasure, those heavens, this earth—all will have vanished away as shadows—which in truth they are. *Here* are the real things,—the unseen. Righteousness,—*that* abides through all worlds, and through all eternity. God is from everlasting to everlasting the same; Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; heaven is the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that *fadeth not away*. These are the real things, abiding for ever, and satisfying too—satisfying our nature in all its faculties, and leaving nothing to want. We must be set right, we must find God, and God who is revealed in Christ, and share in the perfection of heaven, before these souls

of ours will have laid hold upon the enduring substance.

God give us wisdom to make it our supreme concern to believe in, and love, and live for the things that are unseen, and that are eternal!

PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION.*

JAMES i. 27.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

THE word of the Apostle used in this text, and in our version translated "religion," means, really, the expression of religious faith and feeling. The word "worship," or, better still, the words "religious service," would more literally render his language, and would give a more distinct and clear idea of his feeling and belief. "Pure worship, pure religious service, and undefiled before God and the Father"—that is, in the judgment of God and the Father—"is this."

You see that there is implied in the language, that the Divine judgment upon this subject may differ

* The last sermon preached by Rev. David Thomas, at Highbury Chapel, October 31st, 1875.

from the human judgment; and we know that it does differ. Let any half-dozen men be required to pass a judgment upon a genuine religious service, and how would they go to work? They would probably go to some chapel—or, more likely, to a church—or, more likely still, if possible, to a cathedral, and there, sitting in judgment upon the religious service which was performed, would most likely differ very much in their judgment respecting the approximation made in the religious service to their ideal of worship, or of true religious service. And I observe that it is very likely that God, in *His judgment, might differ from the judgment* of them all, for, according to this Epistle, God in His judgment of the expression, in fact, of the idea of a religious service would not go to a church, or a chapel, or a cathedral at all for an example of it. Not at all. According to this Epistle, this is pure religious service and undefiled, "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Of course it is not intended by this that practical sympathy with the fatherless and widows (here alluding to the suffering and needy), and a moral life combined with it, does of itself express a

religious service. Religion has to do with God. There is no religious service where one has not to do with God. Practical sympathy with the suffering, and a purely moral life, are not necessarily a religious life. It becomes a religious service only when it has in it a reference to the will and the pleasure of God. Neither will it be understood, of course, by anybody, that this is the only religious service—that it is this exclusively of all others—that pure and undefiled religion is this and only this. A Jew, such as was the writer of these words, would be the last man who would write thus of the Jews' service of the synagogue and of the Temple; a Jew converted to the Christian faith, as this writer was, would not make light of the services in the primitive Christian assemblies. Indeed, further on in this Epistle, you find him giving directions respecting what was just and fitting in the arrangements for Christian assemblies met together for Christian worship,—that is, for direct and literal worship, so far was he from intending to make light of the religious service which consists in direct acts of worship. What he clearly intends is to assert the reality, and the necessity, and the pre-eminence in importance, of that religious service

which consists in the recognition of God by caring for the needy and suffering, and by living a pure and righteous life in the world. And that is the subject on which I hope, with much physical weakness, to address you for a few minutes this morning —the higher form, the higher character of that service of God, that religious service, which consists in a benevolent and a pure life.

And as an illustration of this, I remark, in the first place, that the direct service of worship depends, for the establishment of its genuineness, upon its being associated with this other service of God, by the merciful and the pure life. A man comes to you, we will suppose, and pays to you very great deference, by his looks, by his words, by his tones, and by his gestures. He makes it appear that he holds you in great consideration, in the utmost esteem, and in deepest affection and reverence. He offers you a kind of worship, and having done that, he goes away, and he is quite regardless of your wishes, and of your requests. He will not, for your sake, attempt to do what is right, as he ought to do, and what you wish him to do, and what would minister to your pleasure and to your service. Now, in such a case, what would be the

worth of that worship which the man had rendered to you? What value would you set upon it? You would feel at no loss at all how to estimate it, as you remembered how he came to you, and bowed down to you, and expressed his reverence for you, and his deep interest in you, and his great love to you. And if he should come again to you, and attempt to repeat that kind of service, you would know how to value it, and you would know how to treat him. You would think it was worth nothing at all unless it was accompanied by a more definite regard for your will and pleasure when he was absent.

How, then, with regard to God? We have come together this morning, and bowed the head, and bent the knee, and closed the eyes, it may be, and lifted up the hands, and looked very grave, very humble, very reverent. And the tone is as the look, and the word is as the tone. People abase themselves before God; they go down in their language to the very dust, and then they exalt Him, they praise Him, they laud Him, they adore Him in their song and in their praise. It looks, in thousands of chapels, and churches, and cathedrals, it looks very like a true worship; but

it is all over, and then they go, and then God,—*God* whom they have so complimented, so extolled, so adored,—God wants them to do something for Him. Not for Himself, or His high throne; they can do no service to Him there: He is infinitely above it. But He identifies Himself with the sin and the need all around them in the world, and He wants them to go and serve Him there; He wants them to be thoughtful, and kind, and tender, and generous to the widow and the fatherless—these representing all the necessitous and the suffering; and He wants them to keep themselves unspotted amid the pollutions of the world around them. But they do not do it; not for His sake—no. They will serve Him, serve Him in the congregation, or at other times. They will serve Him with their looks, with their tones, with their gestures; they will adore Him in their song and in their prayer, but they won't do the other thing, they won't open their hearts to help the necessitous, they won't live a pure and a righteous life. What depth could there be in their worship? What sincerity could there have been in it? What real reverence could they have felt for His character, or for His will? Of how much value could it have

been to Him? Must it not have been outside? Must it not have been, to Him that looketh on the heart, a shallow and a worthless thing? Would He not say, as they returned to Him again to worship, "Who hath required this at your hands?" But there can be nothing plainer than this, that it is the week-day that reveals how much the Sunday's worship is worth. It is when there is a loving and a pure life in the week that the service rendered to God in direct worship is proved to be a real service. I call this the highest service, because it is necessary to establish the genuineness of that other service of worship.

And secondly, the service of a pure and loving life is the highest kind of religious service you can render God, because it involves in it the deepest homage paid to God. As you very well know, the genuine worship is homage, bowing to the Supreme, homage rendered to the Highest; and I say that the profoundest homage is rendered to God when, for His sake, there is love and purity in the life.

Two men, we may suppose, pay you homage. The one does it by his postures, by the words in which he expresses his sense of your great excellence. Another man does it, not by his words

and postures in your presence, not by that only, but also by trying, in his daily life, to resemble you in that for which he so much admires and loves you. He shows his homage to you by making it his aspiration and labour to be like you. Is not that the deepest homage? Are you not accustomed to say, that there is no compliment paid us like imitation of us; and that they honour us the most who are striving to live as they see us living? Well, then, it is just so in our relations to the Great Being, our Father who is in heaven. They honour Him most who not only praise Him to His face, not only use the strongest language of compliment when they come into His presence, heaping epithet upon epithet, and then bow down in the dust before Him, veiling their faces as the angels do; but who, when they are away from that presence, think about Him, and so admire Him, and so feel the attraction of the excellence of His nature, that nothing will satisfy them but to make it the aim of their life to be like Him. That is the homage which is profoundest, which is seen in the attempt to make the life a loving and a pure one, which is seen in our attempts to mould our small life after the pattern of the

infinite life of God. And what is that life of God? What is God? God is love, God is light. God is love, and the love of God means pity for the widow and the fatherless, for all the suffering everywhere; and the light of God means the purity which is not sullied by any stain or spot in this world. And the man who is full of pity for the needy and suffering, and the man who keeps, or tries to keep, his garment spotless amid all the defilements of English society, he is trying to copy God, he is trying to be godlike, and so to honour Him. Oh, that is the worship! that is the worship! *He* bows down lowest, *he* feels how glorious God is, who is satisfied with nothing but an attempt through life to copy Him, and to reflect His great, glorious image.

Again, this is the highest kind of religious worship on the ground of the example of Christ. He clothed Himself with our nature, He put Himself into the conditions of our humanity, and then He offered worship to the Father. And the direct worship of the Father was a most sacred thing in the eyes of Christ. He would go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. How very frequently this is mentioned in the brief narratives of the Gospel, that, on the Sabbath day, He was

found in the synagogue. The synagogue had a special attraction for Him. He was so often there, according to the record, that we may conclude that whenever the Sabbath day returned, He would be sure to be there at the services of worship. And then you all remember how very sacred was the Temple in His eyes; what a wonderful attraction He felt to that great central place of worship. The only view we have of Him in His boyhood, is that in which He is seen in the Temple; and His parents, having lost Him, have found Him there. And when the reproof was administered to Him, He replied by saying, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Now, many understand that, "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?" You have been looking for Me, but why did you not come here at once? Could you not have concluded that you would have found Me in these holy precincts? Where could you have looked for the child but in his own father's house? Did you not understand that I was very likely to be in My Father's house? But whatever He meant by His words, there is the fact of the attraction of the Temple that separated Him from His earthly parents.

And when He had appeared in public life, you will remember how He was continually going up to the Temple. He must go up to all the feasts, and if He went up at other times to Jerusalem, you scarcely ever read of His being at Jerusalem without His being in the Temple. What raised His indignation more than anything else that we have on record during His life was to witness the desecration of the Temple by the buyers and sellers, and the money-changers. That spectacle fired His soul with a consuming zeal and anger —so strong were His affections towards the Temple. St. Mark tells us that, on one of the evenings just before His death—one, or two, or three evenings at the most—He went up to Jerusalem, and into the Temple; and there, in the Temple, He did not say anything, but Mark says: "He looked upon all things round about." I think you can understand it. He was just thinking that that was a place He would find it hard to part with. There, as the twilight was closing around Him, and the day's labour was over, there He was, in silence, lingering, lingering, looking at all things in the place, like a man taking his last look of some one, or some thing,

that had been most sacred and dear to him in his life.

Thus was He attached to the Temple, and it indicates what His devotion was to the worship of the Temple, what supreme importance He would, in many respects, attach to it. But when He came to compare that direct and formal visit to the synagogue, that service of worship in the Temple, with the service of God in a merciful and a holy life, you perhaps will remember how He made the latter transcend the former in importance. What He found all through the Jewish society at that time was this: men attaching the first importance to religious observances in worship in the synagogue, in the Temple, and elsewhere, and attaching the second importance to the religious service which consisted in merciful deeds and pure morals; and it was His constant aim, all through life, to direct His condemnation against that great popular error. Recall how He denounced the religious teachers, and the labours of men in the religious world, because they were so scrupulous about religious observance, whilst, at the same time, He says they omitted the weightier matters of the law. And what were the matters

which He enumerates, and which were weightier than all praying in the synagogue or Temple, than all sacrificing, than all observances of worship? What were the weightier matters? He says they were judgment, mercy, and faith—mercy, that cared for the widow and the fatherless; judgment and faith, that is, keeping one's self unspotted from the world. These are the weightier things. Then is the higher service rendered to God, when these are given to Him. "Go ye," He says to them at another time, "Go ye," to the religious heathens, "and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Sacrifice on the altar is good; it is a Divine ordination; but mercy is something better and higher. It is good to be bending devoutly over the altar and its sacrifice; but it is better to be bending generously over the suffering and the needy and helpless, and living a pure life. So Christ taught all through His life; for there was a necessity, in the immorality of the age, that it should be shown that the great service of God was the service of a loving and a pure life.

And He not only taught it by His words, but He teaches it by the example of His life. You look to Him in the Gospels, and what is it you

see? What is the figure, as you look at the Gospel histories, what is the figure that comes out first of all, and that stands out ever most prominently? Is it the figure of one lifting up his hands in prayer? Is it the figure of one standing by an altar, and offering sacrifice? Is that what you see, and see continually, as you look into the Gospels? Is that the figure that has been before the eyes of Christendom all through the ages, working with so much power upon the mind of Christendom? It is not that. It is not the figure, the form, of a worshipper or sacrificer. Perhaps you hardly ever look, with the eyes of your mind, upon Jesus engaged in acts of worship, standing by an altar. It is not that. You look into the Gospels, and the figure comes before you as that of One among the sick and the sorrowing, and the needy and the miserable, pitying them, soothing them, healing them, saving them. And you look again at that figure, and what strikes you in His personal aspect is the white garment which He wears. It is unsullied, it is unspotted by the world, full of pollution all around Him. There is falsehood everywhere, but you see Him all true; the wrong is done by everybody around

Him, but He does only the right; all the ways along which He goes are polluted, but He is all pure. That is what you see: the figure of One full of pity, and clothed in a spotless white robe.

So He served God—most of all. Thus He rendered the grand service to His Father, by living that life of love and mercy, and that life of spotless purity. No temptation was spared Him; no humiliation, no cruelty, no outrage, no pain. He was tried by the direst agony, He suffered the most shameful and miserable of all deaths, and He maintained His purity and integrity through it all; and offered Himself at last, without a spot on His name or His nature or life, to God—and so honoured Him, so served Him. That was His religion most of all; that was His grand religious service, the service of a life characterised by loving deeds and pure morals—morals absolutely pure. So, if we would worship in the highest sense, if we would offer God the highest religious service; it must be the Christlike service—the service of a life full of pity, and a life marked by its purity.

Once more: this is the highest kind of religious service because it is the greatest religious influence in the world. Now, there never were a people,

probably, who were more careful about their religious observances and worship than were the Jews in our Lord's time. The Sabbath-day, the synagogue, and, yet more at that time, that great central house of God, were all unspeakably sacred in their eyes; and their devotion to the services, according to the Divine requirement, was scarcely ever paralleled or equalled. But what did it all come to? How much was the world the better for it? How were the outside people affected by it? Were they drawn to God? Were they won to the faith and obedience of God? Not at all. Whilst all this was going on, the people generally, the world, was getting worse and worse. But in that day there lived one Man, who was more than man; but He was a perfect man, and He lived a life full of love, full of all purity. A very short life it was, but how grand in its influence! How it wrought upon men's minds! How it has been working upon men's minds all through Christendom ever since! What a power is that short life to-day because of its loving deeds and perfect righteousness! What a power it is! That is the religious service that has told in Christ's case—the service of a life full of love, and unstained.

And so it is to-day. It is not by going to church and chapel, and being scrupulous about every form, and making the service as pleasing as possible, that we can hope to produce the effect upon those around us, bringing them to God. If they see us very observant at stated times, very devoted to our worship in its external forms, and, it may be, to a considerable extent, quite sincerely; and yet if they see us all through the week quite hard in our temper and spirit, and not without spots in our life, why, this failure in the life will plead more loudly against our religion a great deal than will that devoted worship on the Sunday plead for it.

An American traveller once asked a negro girl whether she was a Christian, and she said, "No, no; not a Christian." "What!" he said, "have you never heard of Christ?" "Oh, yes; I have heard of Him." "And don't you love Him?" "Yes; oh, yes. I love Him—*Him*," she said, "but I am not a Christian. I have seen a great many things." "Why?" said the man, "if you love Christ, why don't you become a Christian?" "Oh," she said, "I love Him—*Him*—but I've been a servant with a great many Christians, and I've seen a great many things, and I cannot turn to a

Christian—I cannot turn to a Christian." She had seen them, she had known they were Christians, and they used to worship. But they were hard masters, and they were not unspotted from the world. She could love Christ, but she could not turn to be a Christian.

If you would have your religious service to be influential, it must be a service, not on the Sunday, or a formal, direct worship only, but a life of benevolent action, and of moral purity and integrity. There is a great need that we should be reminded of this in the present day, and that we should keep it in mind, for there never was a day probably, at least not for centuries in England, when there was such a revival of religious forms and religious observances, and when so much importance was attached to them. It seems to be quite a study now, to make these services as beautiful, and as grand, and as imposing on the imagination as may be. Now, whatever else may be said of this, no one here will doubt but that we can say of it that it involves this danger, that, in the religious life, the highest importance should be attached to that to which the highest importance does not belong at all. The religious service of God, dear hearers, is,

in its highest character, not offered in churches, or chapels, or cathedrals, but all through the week. It is found in the life of love and the life of purity. Do not, I pray you, separate religion from your daily life. Do not say that religion is one thing, and the profession, and the business, is another. Religion goes over everything, and, wherever you are doing a merciful deed, wherever you are resisting evil, and keeping your garment clean when there is much around you that would spot, there you are religious in the very best sense, there you are offering a religious service which is pure and undefiled. You do not want a priest to be offering the highest kind of religious service, you do not want a church, you do not want an altar. Wherever you find a needy man, wherever you find a suffering brother, wherever you find anything tempting you to what is low and base, that is the place to be religious in the highest sense, to make the greatest offering to God. Mercy is to God greater than sacrifice. Purity in the heart and life transcends all ritual observances.

God forbid that I should make light of religious services like those in which we are engaged to-day. They are good. They are due to God. It is due to

Him that we should meet together, and read, and pray, and sing, and praise Him, and glorify Him. It is due to Him. It is due to ourselves. It is for our good; it is for our relief, and for our comfort, and for our joy, if our hearts are right with God. And it is helpful to the life of the week, and this is the highest significance that belongs to it. It is helpful for the other life which I have been inculcating. For consider. We come here to worship God. We approach Him with our spirits, and hold fellowship with Him. But what is God, I ask again? God is Love: God is Light. Truly to worship God here, is to be in contact with Infinite Love. You cannot very well do that, and not be touched with pity for those around you. Truly to worship God, is to be in contact with Infinite Purity. You cannot very well do that, and not feel more pure than you were before.

Do we realise this as the essence of our worship in this place? Do we realise it this morning? Do we realise it now? Is my mind now in contact with the Impersonation of Infinite and Eternal Love? Is my spirit in contact with the Infinite Purity? That is worship when it is real. It is our small nature brought near the Infinite Love and

near the Infinite Purity, and you must see that that cannot be very well without its reacting upon us. The Infinite Love will be too strong for us, and will subdue our hardness and selfishness. The Infinite Purity will be too strong for us, and will cleanse us from impurity. We shall be more pitiful and more pure, as we truly worship. That is, we shall be stronger for looking after the fatherless and widow, for keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. That is the great end of these Sunday services. If they fail us in that, they altogether fail us. God grant that whenever we so come near Him in His love and purity, we may be more and more merciful, and more and more holy in our daily life.

And may God bless these words !

APPENDIX.

ADDRESS

By Rev. Dr. Stoughton, *at Mr. Thomas's Funeral.*

"DAVID, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep." These words formed part of the passage on which last Saturday our departed friend was preparing an expository discourse, which he lived not to deliver. He fell asleep while the manuscript remained unfinished, the sermon unspoken.

If we gave way this morning to natural feelings, apart from the influence of the Gospel of Christ, we should speak chiefly, if not entirely, of death—of its cruel cutting asunder of earth's tenderest and most loving ties; of the desolation left at this moment in many a heart by the thought, "I shall see that manly form, gaze on that expressive countenance, grasp that kindly hand no more." But our endeavour shall be to rise above such thoughts, to enter the precincts of our blessed faith, to press within the veil, and to realise the fact that we are disciples of Jesus, the risen Lord. We would not regard the present as the hour of eventide —of sunset, with clouds around departing light; but as a beautiful calm morning, the hour of prime, with a sun-rise breaking over us from the everlasting hills.

We can say—the New Testament authorises us to say it—our brother has not descended into darkness; "he is risen"—risen to the heaven of eternal light.

Life and death do come together to-day, but how, in the Christian view of things?

Life is seen unconquered, invincible by all which death can do. "I am the resurrection and the life," saith the Lord; "he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me *shall never die*." He "hath abolished death." Life is seen amongst us triumphant over all that death has done. We feel acutely what in this case the last enemy has accomplished. But we can add: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Nay, more. We regard eternal life not simply as antagonistic to death, but as strangely connected with it, in harmony with it; yea, as springing out of it, originating in it; for what the Redeemer says of Himself we are warranted to apply to His people: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it until life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be." Death was a necessity in the case of Christ—a painful, yet glorious necessity. He died to live, to be a root of salvation, to be a tree of life, to bring forth much fruit; to communicate, to multiply life; to produce, in abundant clusters, lives on lives, rich and beautiful like His own. He could not give all the life He meant to give without dying. And as to this blessed necessity of passing through death into nobler, richer, more fructi-

fying life, the law obtains with the disciples, though after a different manner of operation in some important respects. Those who are in Christ must die to live. How can we enter the mansions of the Father's house without going away? How can we receive the welcome of the perfect yonder without saying good-bye to the imperfect here? How can we be robed in light, and with joy and rejoicing enter the King's palace, without first leaving our mortal garments in the river? We must be sown in weakness, that we may be raised in power; sown a natural body, that we may be raised a spiritual body.

Therefore we sorrow not as those who are without hope. This is not a pagan funeral; we carry not inverted torches; we wail out no dirge; we do not give vent to "mourning, lamentation, and woe." We would imitate the early Christians, and carry our torches upright, with an unquivering flame. We would strew flowers on the grave. We would say with Chrysostom, "What mean our hymns? Do we not glorify God, and give Him thanks that He hath crowned him that is departed, that He hath delivered him from trouble, that He hath set him free from all fear?"

The shock given by our friend's sudden departure is compensated for by the thought that our pain is his peace. How much trouble, discomfort, weariness, agony has he been saved by the unexpected speed of his departure! It was almost a translation. Just a pause before stepping into the chariot; a moment's pause; a hasty but loving farewell; and then an ascent, swift as the light, to a world where

"Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown."

We would not bewail the ending of the life *that was*,

but rather rejoice in the life *that is*. So far from the life of David Thomas being over, it is begun again, grandly, immortally, gloriously begun. No one can be more sensible than I am of the mysteries of death; but I believe—I venture to say—I know something of *what* my beloved friend is, of *where* he is, now. My Master's words are a rock for my faith, they are sunlight to my soul: "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." And with thonghts of the present and the future touching the departed we couple thoughts of the past. By the gateway—on the steps of the portal which he leaves to be what he is now—we would for a moment linger over the life he lived *then*, when we saw him amongst us.

I attempt no sketch of his history, no portrait of his character; I only give utterance to two or three deep impressions left on my mind.

I. What a childlike devotedness there was in this remarkable man. I never saw in anyone as in him the union of the true man of God with the true child of God. The union was manifest in his prayers, his preaching, his conversation, his life. In public, in the pulpit, there was nothing vainly grand, no oratorical flourishes in his sermons, no grandiloquent soliloquies in his prayers, no striving after effect in the presence of an admiring congregation, "no glimmer of a self-complacent smile," "no spreading out another, and yet another scarlet fold." Nor, on the other hand, was there anything poverty-stricken, mean, low, vulgar, in his thoughts or expressions, or anything effeminate, either,—any morbid or trivial sentimentalism. No, all was manly—really dignified. Yet *childlike;* inconceivably so to those who did not know him. The awe, reverence,

love of a filial spirit in the presence of the Infinite Father, were expressed in the utterances of your departed pastor after a manner of the rarest kind. And in the spirit of his teaching amongst you he was never an arrogant dogmatist, but an instructor, a prophet, sensible of, sometimes overwhelmed by, the air, the atmosphere of mystery in which Divine truth lives and breathes in this world of mingled matter and spirit, of confused struggle, of sin, temptation, doubt, and faith. He held up the light, the pure Gospel light—the light in which you could see the crucified and the risen One, the suffering Saviour and the glorified King—but he did not forget, nor could you forget whilst listening to him, what Paul said, "We know in part, we prophesy in part." In conversation he was not a pugnacious controversialist, but a friend and brother, willing to give, willing to take, hints and suggestions helpful to the searcher into God's inexhaustible truth. Christ was his oracle, his guide. He came to Him as a little child: "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

II. What broad, what intense sympathy he had! Sympathy sometimes is broad without being intense, or intense without being broad. His was both. I speak not now of his domestic affection: that subject shrinks from publicity. How deep, earnest, overflowing, was his home love! How he lived in, and for, as well as with the dear ones round his hearthstone, none but they can know, and I am sure they would say it is impossible to tell.

I am thinking now of his wider sympathies.

He felt the many-sidedness of humanity, knew the difference between mind and mind, heart and heart, man and man. He comprehended and appreciated

the many standpoints there are of human thought and opinion, the many degrees there are of human sensibility, the infinite variety there is in human circumstances and experiences. He would fain enter into all, and allow for all. But this did not create a light, shallow, superficial kind of feeling. How *deeply* he could, and did, enter into the sorrows and joys, the cares and hopes, of others, many of you know full well. What he was as a pastor and a friend you can never forget. His anxious look, his tremulous voice, his agitated mien, without an atom of affectation, when he spoke to you in your troubles, will never die out of your memory.

III. What a contrast there was between his physical self-consciousness and what I would call his Christian unconsciousness of self. His organisation was of no common order. Massive, broad, robust in appearance, his constitution in truth was delicate. The elements, if I may so say, were strong and vigorous, yet subtle and refined; the parts of his nature were balanced and blended in rare combinations. And this was noticeable to those who knew him well, that he had in him a large amount of nervous sensibility—a physical consciousness singularly acute and sensitive. He was touched and affected by influences all round of a kind imperceptible to harder, tougher natures. Yet, in contrast with this, there was a singular amount of self-forgetfulness. In how many worthy men do you detect a pervading egotism! It is the centre of their conscious being. All lines concentrate on or radiate from one centre—*I*. Otherwise was it with our noble friend. He had no self-importance, no self-seeking, no vanity, no assumption, no anxiety of a kind common, I fear—"What do people think of me? What impression do I

make on them?" Desire to look great; an absorbing wish to "achieve a reputation" in the service of Him who made Himself of no reputation; a habit of self-pleasing, in a ministry professedly devoted to Him who pleased not Himself;—how low, mean, poor, inconsistent, disgraceful it looked in our friend's eyes! I have a remembrance of his dwelling upon this in a public address, speaking of it as infinitely little. I think I catch his tone of voice; I think I see the penetrating glance of that eye of his, so full of expressive life, as he has said to me of such things, "So *small*, sir, so very small." Yes, such things are small. We feel at this moment, with death and eternity before us, that *indeed* they are so. Let us strive to keep up the feeling. Hunting after popularity—no one can think of it in connection with him except in the way of contrast. Popularity did follow him. It sometimes besieged him; but he was frightened at it, and sought to get out of the way into retirement. He loved home, and friends, and paths of quiet, unobtrusive, unnoticed usefulness. His main desire was to please the Master, "to be accepted of Him." And now he gathers the harvest of a Christ-devoted, instead of a self-devoted life. And his beautiful spirit, looking down on us from above, bids us not admire and praise, but imitate and follow. "Be ye followers of me, as I desired to be of Christ."

IV. What marvellous spiritual power he exercised. Advisedly I call it *marvellous*. A friend said to me the other day: "David Thomas seemed to find out a new and original way of getting at one's spiritual nature." He had an *original* way of getting at one's spiritual nature. The like of it I do not remember. It defied imitation, as it puzzles attempts at analysis. His

appearance, manner, expression of countenance, eye, smile, frown, his movement of body and hand, much of which was peculiar and strange (his *own* without study, and without any consciousness of it at the moment) contributed, no doubt, to the effect he produced, though at first to some it might seem to mar it. But the manner was little or nothing compared with the matter —the thoughts, the words; the words that grew out of the thoughts, and were as part of them—the living envelope and enclosure, as healthy, transparent skin is of the human body, with its vital substances, organs, functions, activities—the thoughts and words of the departed—laid hold of you potently, irresistibly. They obtained a mastery over you and led you away captive, feeling, "How true are these words, how just; how they penetrate my conscience and pierce my heart, and make me feel ashamed of myself; make me feel sensible of my unworthiness and sin; make me desirous of having more of the purity, the humility, the honesty, the candour, the charity, the self-sacrifice, the Christ-like spirit of the Gospel."

Our friend had a keen power of analysis, a quick insight into the force or weakness of an argument; a logical method of arranging and working out the subject he had in hand; great knowledge of mankind; a penetrating perception of evil and good, of faults and foibles, of virtues and excellences, of woes and wants; and, finally, he had great skill in sounding the depths of men's hearts and bringing up to light many a tangled mass of motives.

But others possess power of this sort, who cannot in the pulpit do what our brother did. Something remains beyond all this to be accounted for. And,

after all, the secret of it was not anything which *he found out*. It was something which came to him *from above*—a kind of inspiration. Inspiring power in teaching, preaching, speaking is very wonderful and very uncommon. Many men can enlighten, convince, gratify, persuade — but not *inspire*. David Thomas could. He moved you, fired you, kindled within you light and heat which flamed and burnt. He did not simply think and feel *for* you, but made you think and feel for yourself. Other things are not to be left out of account. But after all, whatever might be the secret of the form, the manner of the operation of his preaching, this lay at the heart of it. He proclaimed God's truth in God's spirit. He was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; and hence his word was with power. And we may truly say, that when he preached, "virtue went out of him." Yes, there is a sense in which those words, in one way only true of the Master, are really true of some of the servants. Christ infuses into them whatever helpful power they can administer; but besides this, there is a consciousness at times—not proud, but humble—of giving forth that which exhausts. There is an outflow of spirit force, which seems to carry the whole being of the man along with it. I remember your pastor's missionary sermon at Surrey Chapel, in May, 1866. He was my guest on that occasion. He talked over the discourse with me the previous evening. I witnessed what he felt before as well as during the delivery. It was very surprising. He seemed to be breathing himself into all he said, infusing his whole spiritual nature into it, fusing and melting his very being into his utterances—virtue went out of him; so that, as the result, we were "pricked to the heart," and

went home praying that, "whether present or absent, we might be accepted of *Him;*" of Him the Judge, of Him the Saviour; of Him, whose acceptance alone is worth our seeking—in comparison with whose approval all human praise is infinitely poor.

Brethren in the ministry, there were effects produced by David Thomas which we cannot reach. But we can all throw our souls into our work; we can all "give ourselves to these things," as the Apostle says,—"be *in* them." How often do we poor preachers of the Word stand *outside* the things we utter, instead of being enveloped, penetrated, imbued with them! God help us to take home a lesson on this subject to-day.

May I be permitted a word of personal affectionate attachment? A friendship of forty-five years has ended. Remembrances of student days, of early ministerial days, rush over me this morning. Your pastor was with me at my ordination, and has brightened many an hour of my life since then. Visits to Bristol on my part, years and years ago; visits since, on his part, to Kensington, are incidents I fondly remember.

Intercourse, instead of lessening, has increased with the rolling on of time. Most intimate of all has been our intercourse of late; especially since the new tie at Ealing has so sacredly been interwoven with older ones, and my family have enjoyed the ministry of dear Arnold, whom I commend to your prayers to-day. I had cherished hopes that whenever your pastor should, like myself, retire, we might pass some years together. Vain hopes, yet beautiful whilst they lasted. "How deeply the shadows fall," says an honoured friend who wrote to me the other day in allusion to my loss, "and how they lengthen as years advance." Yes, it is sad to

think of the long and precious friendship that is gone, and the lengthening shadow which comes in its place. But, oh, let me remember it is not gone. I fall back into the spirit of my opening remarks, and think of our Saviour Christ, who has brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel, and who, when He was going away, said: "Let not your hearts be troubled. I will come again, and receive you to Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." He *will* not forget, He *does* not forget, His disciples, but will bind them to Himself, and so bind them to one another *for ever*.

And now, in conclusion, let me gather into a prayer what appeals to our spiritual sensibilities on this occasion. Father of spirits, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, look on this bereaved Church to-day. Pity them in their sorrow. Strengthen their faith. May they fall into Thine arms, trustfully and lovingly. May they seek Thy guidance, follow Thy will, be filled with Thy Spirit. May they remember the counsels and treasure up in their hearts the appeals of their pastor. If there be any here who heeded not the voice now silent, may they listen to the voice which speaks to them from heaven, and come to Thee, through Christ, and live for ever. Comfort the mourners. Heal the broken-hearted family. Turn the shadow of death into the morning. Deal in Thine own tender, loving way with the widow and the fatherless sons and daughters.

And look, O Lord and Master, on us who have to speak for Thee and watch for souls. May our brother's mantle fall on us, and a double portion of his spirit be granted us. We are utterly unworthy; but Jesus is worthy. For His sake look on us, and help us to speak for Thee, to work for Thee.

LETTERS.

From the Rev. J. C. Harrison.

66, *Regent's Park-road, N.W., March* 21, 1876.

My Dear Mr. Thomas,—

I am quite ashamed to think that your very kind request has not received an earlier answer. The truth is, that when your note came in I immediately took up my pen and tried to jot down a few things respecting your dear father; but I soon laid it down again, for I found how difficult it was to say anything which would give real insight into what, in him, was special and characteristic. I felt the disadvantage of not having known him so intimately as my friend Stoughton.

I was drawn to him, wherever I met him, as by a strange and delightful attraction. I was moved by his preaching—or rather *raised* by it—as by the preaching of no other man, because it was so real and so spiritually penetrating. And yet my opportunities of close intercourse with him were not numerous, and I never had any of those quiet, unreserved conversations in which all that is deepest and best in a man comes into view. When I met him at the houses of his own people, I was struck with the manifest interest he took in them, his affectionate readiness to enter into whatever concerned them at the time.

Once or twice, when I chatted with him alone, I felt how strong a spell he threw over you by the way in which he looked at you. His soul seemed to beam forth in his eye. His glance expressed sympathetic interest in you—affectionate personal regard—as clearly as his words expressed thought. He made you feel that he was not merely *talking* to you, but had real *communion* of spirit with you, and thereby drew out your heart towards him. I never felt what *fellowship* was more truly than when conversing with him; and hence I always looked forward to the chance of meeting him with inexpressible pleasure.

As to his preaching, it is impossible by mere description to convey to anyone who had not heard him what it was. There was the absence of almost everything which, in vulgar estimation, constitutes fine pulpit oratory. There were no grand sentences, no glittering imagery, no tricks of voice and manner; on the contrary, his gestures were sometimes awkward, his delivery hurried and hesitating, his accent decidedly Welsh; and yet, when he was himself happy, he laid hold of you so firmly that you could not get away from him, and did not wish to do. He seemed to carry you out of yourself into a higher region, in which only God's favoured ones habitually dwell. If you afterwards reviewed what he had said, you would see that there was great acuteness, clear and connected reasoning, combined with quiet, felicitous illustration—a style which never called attention to itself, but yet exactly covered and expressed his thought. But it was none of these things which accounted for the singular power he exerted over you; it was a certain *spirit* which breathed through all, and gave it a kind of ethereal individuality

and a tremulous charm. I can never forget the effect produced by his missionary sermon at Surrey Chapel; an effect so sacred, so elevating, so stimulating, so lasting, that I cannot read or quote the text to the present day, without coming again, as it were, under the influence of that sermon: "Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him."

But his work on earth is finished, and we are poorer for his loss. To him the exchange is all gain; his ardent wish is realised—he *has been* "accepted of Him." May his mantle rest on you, as you take his place; may your name be held in as high honour, and your work be attended with as abundant success.

With kindest regards, believe me,

My dear Mr. Thomas,

Yours affectionately,

J. C. Harrison.

From Mr. Augustus Phillips.

Clifton, March 22, 1876.

My Dear Sir,—

I am very much pleased to learn from your letter of the 18th inst. that you are engaged in the work of publishing some sermons of your late father, together with a few records of impressions and reminiscences relating to him.

You ask me to contribute to these impressions, knowing,—as you well know,—how long and intimate was my friendly intercourse with him. I only regret my utter inability to reproduce in writing any fair presentation of his rare and special qualifications.

As a preacher, as a citizen, as a companion and conversationalist, he was, in the opinion of a host besides myself, the easy chief amongst chiefs. As a preacher, I think that, in the general opinion of his constant hearers, his great success arose very much from the habit which he had of thinking out from the beginning the whole thought of the sermon, and afterwards building it up. One could not detach a passage from, neither could one add a passage to, any sermon of his without, more or less, marring the unity and perfectness of the work. Mr. Thomas's knowledge of the weight and value of words for the exact expression of ideas was remarkable,—almost, in its extent, unique. He was not a particularly fluent speaker; sometimes he would distinctly hesitate, till the exact word to express his meaning came to his mind; then the word seemed well worth waiting for.

No preacher, I imagine, ever cared less for words *as words*, and illustrations *as illustrations*, than he did; but oftentimes he made the latter, as always the former, do thorough service. Both words and illustrations always helped, never overlaid, the argument. Mr. Thomas was known amongst the body to which he belonged as a great and original thinker. He did not undervalue the opinions of other men, but he did not build upon them. He had no need to do so. The faculty of deep and clear thinking was to him in its exercise too engrossing and agreeable a work to suffer him to think other than his own thoughts, and to work these out otherwise than in his own manner. I feel quite sure that he never worked out any consecutive thought-series, except from his own independent faculty; and this power, of almost absolute origination, rendered his preaching to the same

people, for so long a period as thirty years, always fresh and vivid. It was indeed commonly remarked that his latest sermons were those most characterised by this rare and special faculty. His sermons were generally not long sermons; his condensed style ensured this.

Respecting his life in our city, in its more public aspects, there are many who could speak with much greater knowledge of it than I can do. To all charitable institutions his services were heartily given, and at their annual or occasional meetings his help was always ready and effective. I should like to have said something respecting his own private benefactions, but upon this point I feel that you would wish me not to enlarge.

Mr. Thomas's best speeches, and those by which he was most known by the general public of Bristol, were made at the annual dinner of the Anchor Society, on Colston's day. I never myself met him on these occasions, but I have often been told of his remarkable success at these meetings; of the effect of his eloquent speech, with its generous frankness, its unshrinking declaration of what he deemed right and true, mingled with his broad and Catholic views, and his full appreciation of the fact that men and things—even in polemics—have a side towards the light.

In private,—in friendly, social intercourse,—Mr. Thomas was a singularly agreeable companion, kind, courteous, generous; always willing to exchange thought, and desirous always of encouraging and strengthening it in others. Not a particle of tyranny mingled with his strength.

For myself, to whom was given, for more than thirty years, his close and intimate friendship, with all its most happy influences, his loss has been such as I

should not have thought possible, save in the case of a very near and dear relative; and the same may be said for all who are about me, and many others besides. To a great extent this is explainable by a reference to his loving and generous nature, with its humorous and genial appreciations, all combined with, and lit up by, his rare force and genius.

Of the purely religious aspect of Mr. Thomas's life I have not spoken. I have reason to believe that his friends and assistant ministers will upon this point bear their especial witness. I would, however, say that I have never known any man in whom the highest life, in its righteousness and mercifulness, was more fully reproduced than in your father.

Had I not already written so many words, I should have said something of Mr. Thomas's especial dislike to everything mean, false, meretricious, but I must not enlarge.

With all kind regards and wishes,

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

AUGUSTUS PHILLIPS.

The Rev. ARNOLD THOMAS,
Ealing.

From MR. P. A. SMITH.

Lucca, Jamaica, Dec. 21, 1875.

MY DEAR MRS. THOMAS,

I SCARCELY think any tidings of loss could have come more home to us (unless from our inner family circle) than those which the last mail brought. We had been looking forward in the hope, not only of

renewed and cordial intercourse with Mr. Thomas for my dear wife and myself, but particularly of the opportunity for our children to see and hear for themselves one of whom they have so often heard from us. The eldest of them was too young when we left Redland to have any real remembrance of him beyond a faint memory of being once or twice held in his arms. All this seems a selfish side of sorrow, and yet for them as for ourselves what we regret as now not to be had is not merely the pleasure of his society, but the real help in Christian life which intercourse with him brought with it, not in any special words spoken, but in the spirit which lived in his whole presence.

In writing to you even more than to Arnold, my memory goes back to the time when we first knew Mr. Thomas, when he preached at Zion Chapel and you lived at Redcliff Parade. His sermons and himself even then, though I was only a schoolboy and had scarcely any personal intercourse with him, seemed to me quite apart from the common course of life, raising thoughts of what was purer, grander, more beautiful than was found elsewhere, and stirring up desire for such objects. The earth and the universe as he sketched them, and life and death and the unseen world, were real and beautiful and awful in a way which other pictures of them knew nothing of. And even since his return from South America, and the new form of his work at Highbury Chapel, himself and his preaching, and his prayers and his social life, have still stood apart in the mind from images of other men's work and life. I think some of Dr. Stoughton's remarks were just and striking, and must have helped to give clearness to the floating thoughts and memories of many friends. Cer-

tainly it is rare to meet with anyone whose presence so strongly rebuked, without a word spoken, whatever was low or base, or petty or selfish. His memory is in itself an influence for good more powerful than the teaching of many other men—a help and comfort when we are on a right track, and a warning when we are wandering to a wrong one.

You will have been receiving many letters, and I know how at such times there may be a burden in seeing expressed again and again the thoughts which are suggested by the loss of friends, but I did not like to keep silence, and I hope you will not think I have done wrongly in adding one more to the tributes of respect and affection to Mr. Thomas's memory which you will have been receiving in different forms from all sides. In my own case and in my dear wife's, but in mine for a long time and more emphatically, there has been a long debt of gratitude for the highest and most real kind of benefits,—help, not, I hope, wholly wasted, towards the attainment of the most true and the only abiding good. The last act of Mr. Thomas's kindness to us was the despatch of a letter last year, which I consider among treasures to be put aside as the inheritance of our children.

It must be a very happy memory that Arnold's life in his father's profession was so closely associated at the outset with him. I had been thinking of the pleasant commencement of his work at Ealing, and the comfort which Mr. Thomas felt in that commencement, but before that, also, at Cotham, he had been working with his father. It is pleasant, too, that his marriage, and his brother's also, should have taken place while Mr. Thomas was able to be with them.

Indeed there is much of happiness in the remembrances, which cannot but mingle with your present sorrow, but the greatest happiness is in the belief that death is really in such cases but the gate of life. Sometimes it is hard to believe and realise this, but in this instance it is comparatively easy. It seems natural to think of him as translated to higher work, kindred with that which had occupied him before, though in a fresh scene. The pursuits and the objects which we imagine in heaven, and which he has in time past helped us to imagine less unworthily, are such as we can well fancy ministering to his new and higher enjoyment, and opening up before him fresh scenes of activity and knowledge, for which his thoughts and desires here were the preparation.

I am writing at a distance from Bamboo, where we have left all our children for a few days. My wife only is with me, and she desires me to send her kind remembrances, and to express her affectionate sympathy with you and with your daughters.

I am, dear Mrs. Thomas,

Yours very sincerely,

P. A. Smith.

From the Rev. U. R. Thomas.

Redland, March, 1876.

My dear Mr. Thomas,

It is a great joy to me to be associated, however humbly, with any tribute to the memory of your honoured and beloved father, for, whilst my feelings towards him are far too reverential to allow me to

attempt anything like an analysis of his mind and character, there were some elements in my relationship to him in Bristol life and work, which may enable me to say what no one else exactly could.

Coming here to begin a very youthful ministry, and knowing that he bore the name and was the friend of my own father, I instinctively looked to him for a fatherliness of care and of counsel, so far as I might need it here. And during all these years I have never looked in vain. The protectiveness and spiritual dignity, and withal the wondrous humility that, as one realised the contrast between us, almost awed one, combined to show me what could be truly meant by the often merely conventional designation, "Father in God." There are, moreover, many ministers here, both younger and older than I, who will for ever associate with his grand figure, his keenly sympathetic tones, his countenance that so often shone with a rare light, the huge tenderness and the chastened strength which, with a Divine fitness, they beautifully expressed,—a tenderness to which we could all confidently turn, and a strength on which we could all safely lean. I write what I fully know when I say that there is not one amongst us, his brethren and his followers in the ministry of the Free Churches in this city, who does not growingly feel that when he died, the tried and trusted friend, the princely leader, left us. Like Elisha, we know that our Elijah has gone. Head and shoulders above most, physically, intellectually, spiritually, he naturally had become our king. And his regal influence in our ministerial circle here was of untold worth. For he breathed amongst us, and I trust into us, a simple frankness and a religious earnestness, and at the same time a hatred

of all assumption and professional conventionalism, which is a priceless boon to such brotherhoods.

It is with mingled feelings of pride and love and responsibility that I record how largely the Church of which I am the first minister owes its origin to your father. It was a colony, in some sense a child, of his Church. And that by his own will. For he did not, with the short-sighted policy of selfishness, seek to keep as members of Highbury all the friends who had gathered round him, and so to preserve intact his influential congregation; but, forecasting the needs of this district, he urged some of such valued friends to leave him and to erect a church barely half a mile distant from his own. His subsequent experience was a new proof that "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth." For never was his congregation, I believe, larger and more influential, its gifts more generous and its activities more far-reaching, than when he was called by the resistless voice to ascend to yet nobler service and fellowship. When I am thus recalling his self-forgetting action in originating our Church, I am pleasantly reminded that in all the detail of the erection of the building—such as in the selection of the Scripture verses that speak to us from its walls,—he took a lively interest, and that his counsels in the formation and early government of the Church were invaluable. And I know that since then he has constantly cared with a sort of protective care for the life and work of the "Redland Park" people and their minister.

He was equally concerned in the welfare of the Churches in the poorest parts of the city. It can scarcely be ever forgotten that whatever danger exists of isolation of interest among Independent Churches, he, and

such as he, are unmistakable illustrations of the practical way in which such danger can be faced and conquered. Even onlookers have seen how frequently he himself visited such Churches, and how he continually sent down bands of workers, carrying thither his influence and his Master's message. It was notable, too, how he bore upon his heart, and helped in many ways that will long be missed, the Churches in the smaller towns and the villages of our county. On how many springs of usefulness and of kindness his hands had pressed, many a minister and many a congregation will perhaps most clearly learn now that hand is still.

But I must not occupy more of your space. Your own strongly-expressed wish that I should contribute to this Memorial must be my excuse for at all intruding any wreath of honour and affection where others, more costly and beautiful than any I have to offer, are already lovingly laid.

Thanking you for letting me thus utter some of what I feel about my revered friend, your father, and rejoicing that you are coming here to be his successor,

I am,

Yours always earnestly,

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

From the REV. E. ARMITAGE.

Waterhead, Oldham, January 6th, 1876.

DEAR ARNOLD,—

You have been good enough to ask me briefly to note down my recollections of Mr. Thomas, and you must have done so because you remember that I, too, for a short time, came within the circle of his kindness, and

that I revere him so deeply, and not at all with the idea that I should be able to add anything of real value to that which his old and intimate friends will say.

But I may at least record my sense of the privilege which it was to me as a young man, and a young minister, to come into contact with Mr. Thomas. It was impossible not to feel attracted by the kindliness of his manner, and interested by the breadth of his sympathies. Nothing could be happier than to watch his fun when he was in holiday humour, and nothing could be gentler than his manner when encouraging and helping somebody who was in trouble or difficulty.

I well remember with what generosity he would make himself out to be beset by just their frailties, and to need as sorely as they did the word of counsel or exhortation that he gave; and how kindly thus he would cheer and strengthen them.

And when Mr. Thomas spoke from the pulpit, I think that his earnest words came recommended in an especial manner to young men by the rare transparency of his character, and his reality in all that he said. We felt that he was speaking of that which he knew, and that he was consciously standing in the presence of that which was hidden from our eyes. I used to be struck very much by the way in which often a sudden turn in his discourse would rivet upon us the lesson which he was expounding, but which we had fancied to have no directly personal application. Suddenly we were confronted by our own daily lives, and forced to avow all their poverty. The petty meanness or the self-indulgence, which had hitherto appeared nothing worse than a surface flaw, appeared in a new light when shown as powerlessness to cross the very threshold of the Chris-

tian life. All the elementary and more obvious teachings of Christian morality gained tremendous power in Mr. Thomas's preaching, as they were shown to be the very conditions of all true communion with Christ.

I never came into contact with any other teacher who brought the common round of daily action beneath the control of such powerful motives.

I remain, dear Arnold,

Your sincere friend,

E. Armitage.

From the Rev. H. E. Bottomley.

Coventry, February 11, 1876.

My Dear Sir,—

I thank you for the opportunity you have kindly afforded me of recording a few of the many impressions and happy reminiscences that your father has in my own case left behind him. On looking back, I feel increasingly how great was my privilege in being associated with him during the last two years of his ministry; years when both his mental and spiritual powers were so highly developed, and the fruits of a life's experience were fast ripening for heaven.

Only those who knew him intimately, and came within the circle of his strange—almost magnetic—influence, can, I think, tell how severe the loss is that many have sustained, and how great the void which he who was at once friend, counsellor, and example, so recently filled in our hearts.

If I may refer to my own impressions of his character, I should say that what struck me at first sight was

the genuine humility and unaffected kindliness he evinced; while those who knew him better became, ere long, aware of a something which drew them to him almost irresistibly; that gave a new and deeper significance to life; that made holiness more attractive, and common daily duties more divine. Although he must have been conscious of his superiority to most of those with whom he came in contact from day to day, yet he never indicated it, but was singularly accessible to others, entering most cordially into their various plans and purposes. I have often felt that in few things was the true greatness of his character more manifest than in the breadth, and strength, and tenderness of his sympathy. He took a great interest in the doings of others.

Sitting quietly by his study fire, he would often talk to me of the men of our own and former times, and yet I have never heard him say an unkind or ungenerous thing. His knowledge of human nature was very striking—the power he possessed of analysing motives, and penetrating to the heart. I do not think I have ever met anyone who seemed to read a man more quickly, and whose judgment was so generally correct. Perhaps the class for which he had the least toleration were the men of narrow souls. His own sympathies were essentially catholic, and while loving heartily his own denomination, he was at the same time ready to appreciate the beautiful, and true, and good, wherever they appeared. Feeling profoundly life's mysteries himself, and at times distressed by them, he could, moreover, sympathise with all doubting, troubled hearts, and do much to guide them into light.

Of the influence of his *spiritual* life, the Church that

he built up, and where he ministered for so many years, is the noblest testimony. Of not a few who are now labouring for Christ in Bristol, teaching the ignorant and rescuing the fallen, supporting with their prayers and contributions the cause of Missions at home and abroad, and trying to lead pure and upright lives, could their late Pastor have said with the Apostle of old, "Ye are my epistle."

I believe that much of what the congregation at Highbury Chapel *are* to-day in thought, and will, and Christian service, they owe to the teacher who Sabbath after Sabbath was quietly impressing *himself* upon those who listened to his words, and that it is *David Thomas* who is still speaking in many a loving heart and pure life. Few men strove more after the ideal of a manly, and yet a gentle Christianity, a valiant, and yet a meek and quiet spirit, and perhaps few men more nearly attained their ideal. For the honour that men receive one of another he cared little —seemed indeed to shrink from it—but coveted the honour that cometh from God alone.

My own relations in the ministry with your father were such, that I look upon it as one of my highest privileges to have known him as I did. So tender, and true, and dear a friend—or rather father—did I find him; so full of kindness and consideration; so generous in his appreciation of what he approved; so delicate in his suggestion and advice. It is my deep satisfaction and joy to know that no shadow of a cloud for one moment disturbed the harmony of our intercourse and mutual work. He was too great for that, and I owe it to his memory to record the subtle influence that his holy life and thoughtful words had over

me. Once only before joining him at Highbury had I the opportunity of hearing him preach, and that was many years ago in Union Chapel, Islington. But the sermon on "Communion with God" was one of those that indelibly imprint themselves on the memory. I seem still to see his intensely earnest, nervous manner as it impressed me on that occasion, and I remember too, how his words awoke in me a strong desire to know more of the man who seemed to live so near to heaven. That first impression of his character and spirituality was, by acquaintance, deepened rather than effaced. Of him it might be truly said that he tried to practise what he preached. The unseen world was a great reality to him, and Christ's presence a glorious fact to be realised in daily life. Often have I heard him tell of the heavenly voices that call upon us to rise in our desires and anticipations Godward; to covet the things above; the holiness, and purity, and truth that are eternal. And often as he spoke did he make heaven seem very near to us, and lead us to forget all about the teacher in the contemplation of the truths he taught. The nearest to God are always the humblest, and this is probably the explanation of that blending of beautiful simplicity and intense spirituality which was so manifest in *him*. A minister who had known him for many years said, in a letter to a friend of mine the other day: "David Thomas was the holiest man I ever knew."

I have ventured to speak only of his relation to his friends in general. How much they have lost to whom he was connected by the loving ties of husband and father, and how heavy their trial must be, those who knew something of his home, and its atmosphere of

piety, and tenderness, and brightness, can a little imagine.

And yet, he is *not lost* to us. We shall deeply miss his earnest face, his genial smile, his pleasant companionship, his wise, tender counsels. But he has left us much that will be our heritage for ever. The words he spoke and the life he lived are enshrined as precious memories in many a heart to-day; and will go far to help us to be true, and earnest, and humble, and faithful here, and to fill us with glad thought and anticipation of the higher service and the joyful meetings hereafter.

I remain, my dear Sir,
With much sympathy,
Yours very cordially,
HENRY E. BOTTOMLEY.

REV. H. ARNOLD THOMAS, M.A.

RESOLUTIONS.

Resolution passed by the Committee of the Congregational Union.

The Committee, while desiring to submit without repining to the dispensations of Divine Providence, regard the death of the Rev. David Thomas, B.A., of Bristol, with profound sorrow.

Mr. Thomas held a distinguished place in the Congregational Ministry. He was endowed with mental faculties of a very high order, and the natural force of these was strengthened by early discipline, and by assiduous culture in later life. His public ministrations were, in consequence, characterised by great vigour and freshness of thought, and were peculiarly fitted to train those to whom he ministered to an intelligent and masculine faith. But its intellectual force, remarkable as that was, was not the distinctive feature of his ministry: that lay in a certain subtle spiritual energy and power of penetration, which brought the truth into immediate contact with the heart and conscience. To this was added the power of letting forth in his ministry all the wealth of a nature peculiarly rich in its sympathies, and of a deep and manifold Christian experience.

The Committee remember with peculiar satisfaction that Mr. Thomas, though averse to public engagements

which called him from his own proper pastoral sphere, consented at the request of his brethren to occupy the chair of the Union some years ago, when he not only addressed the Assembly with characteristic felicity and power, but was felt in all its deliberations as an elevating and holy influence. It is a matter for profound gratitude to God that the Congregational Churches of England have had in their service a Christian workman so skilful, faithful, and honoured as Mr. Thomas; and while keenly feeling the great loss which those Churches have suffered by his death, the Committee would look to the Head of the Church with strong desires and prayer, that He would raise up men of His own choosing to build on the foundations of the great men He is from time to time calling to their reward.

Resolution passed at the Monthly Meeting of the Associated Ministers of the three Denominations in Bristol.

That the brethren, startled and distressed by the sudden and unexpected decease of their dear brother and fellow-labourer, the Rev. David Thomas, B.A. (who was present with them at their last meeting), desire to record their deep sense of the great loss which they have sustained in his removal. They look back with feelings of mournful pleasure on their association with their departed friend. They give thanks to God for the rare qualities of mind and heart with which he was endowed, fitting him for eminent service in the Church of Christ; for the combination in him of clear, vigorous, and comprehensive intellect with tenderness and fervour; for his devout spirit, the integrity and purity of his life, his simplicity and sincerity, gentleness and

humility; for his ever-ready sympathy with his fellow-ministers, and with all others, in perplexity or sorrow; for his fidelity to his own convictions, and his large-hearted charity towards those who differed from him; for the earnestness and faithfulness of his preaching, and his singular power in presenting the Gospel in its practical aspects. They praise God for the long period during which, notwithstanding the apprehensions entertained of his early removal, he was permitted to labour, and the great work he was enabled to accomplish in advancing the highest interests of men; and, while lamenting that they shall see his face no more, they rejoice in the assurance that he has entered on nobler service and greater blessedness in the temple above.

They desire to assure the Church over which, from its formation, he presided, of their sympathy with them under their grievous loss; and their prayers that they may experience all needful support and guidance under the trying circumstances in which they are placed by their beloved pastor's death.

They would also express their yet more tender sympathy with his sorrowing widow and children, under this latest and heaviest of the successive strokes of the hand of God which they have been called to bear; and pray for them that they may realise in their deep sorrow the fulness of Divine consolation.

Signed on behalf of the meeting,

E. G. Gange (*Chairman*).
F. W. Gotch.
George Wood.
P. Rutherford.
W. R. Skerry (*Secretary*).

EXTRACTS.

From the "CHRISTIAN WORLD." *

WHO is David Thomas? He is one of the clearest thinkers and, *sui generis*, one of the most powerful preachers of the present day. Unlike the great Apostle, his bodily presence is by no means "weak." Towering, like Saul, above even his tall brethren, with broad but somewhat high shoulders, crowned by a noble and massive head, encircled by hair touched by Time's hoary fingers, he ascends the pulpit evidently awed by the solemnity of his office, reminding you of the Hebrew prophets trembling beneath "the burden of the Lord."

> "Much impressed
> Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
> And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
> May feel it too; affectionate in look,
> And tender in address, as well becomes
> A messenger of grace to guilty men.

You can hardly believe that the commanding figure which seems to cast the shadow of its strength over the audience is that of a delicate man. You perceive at once, however, that he is intensely nervous. Nervous anxiety looks through every lineament of his countenance. His first words are abrupt and rugged, rather hurled forth than spoken; but as he proceeds,

* This appeared in April 1865.

whether in prayer or preaching, any defect in manner, any hesitation or faltering, is forgotten in the excellence and originality of the matter. His Welsh accent rather enhances than detracts from the effect; it imparts piquancy and freshness, possibly on the principle that the same thought which you instantly recognise as an old acquaintance when seen in its Saxon dress, seems almost a stranger when arrayed in French or German, and altogether so in Hebrew or Welsh. Better than listening to the sermons of some preachers it is to hear Mr. Thomas pray. The spirit of deep devotion breathes through every part of the sacred exercise; adoration, confession, supplication are pressed in language of severe simplicity, and yet of striking beauty. There is an entire absence of those platitudes which so often mark and mar public prayer. As you fix your eyes upon the preacher beginning his sermon, you see that thought and time have begun to write their lines upon his brow; you see that the brow is broad and high, but your attention is arrested not so much by the head as by the face. All the features are large,—the eyes, the nose, the mouth: that face, you cannot help feeling, is one of unmistakable power, keenness, and sensibility. No repose is there, but an unrest; it is not the face of one who feels that he has reached the *Ultima Thule* of religious thoughts, but of one who is strongly impelled onwards, ever onwards! By what enchantment are you made captive by the preacher, and led whithersoever he will? Not by the magic spell of imagination, nor the charm of fancy; not by the fascination of rhetoric, nor the resistless sweep of oratory, for of these the preacher is almost altogether destitute. And yet he enchains—nay, transfixes you. Where, then, lies

the power of this mighty talker? What is the secret of his strength? Chiefly in the reality which animates all he says, and the naturalness with which he says it. Reality stamps every word and every accent; every utterance burns with the fire of intense conviction—a fire which lights up old and familiar truths with new brightness and glory. For impression, the preacher evidently trusts to the force of truth, not to the graces of elocution; he presents that truth in the most direct and natural manner, and with an earnestness at times well-nigh agonising."

From the "NONCONFORMIST," *November* 10*th*, 1875.

IT is with deep regret that we have to record the unexpected decease of the Rev. David Thomas, of Bristol, who has just died from heart disease.

Domestic affliction conduced, no doubt, to this unexpected event; but of all men who could afford to die, David Thomas, of Bristol, was perhaps the first. We remember his courage with his gentleness, his firmness with his humility, his conscientiousness with his mild suavity.

He stood, not alone, but prominent, as a good man, a man of exquisite affections and of rare holiness. He was like a city set upon a hill—the truest incarnation of the Christian character.

From the "WESTERN DAILY PRESS."

IT is for the pulpit rather than the press to elucidate and enforce the moral of such a life as that of the Rev. David Thomas; but it is not beyond the functions of

the editorial pen to pause for a moment to note the special loss which Bristol has sustained by the death of one of our most honoured citizens. The words which Tennyson applies to his ideal knight—"modest, kindly, all-accomplished, wise"—may be used to describe one side of the character of the deceased minister. His modesty approached sensitiveness; his kindliness was of the gentlest Christian type; his accomplishments, from the literary standpoint, were great; and that he made a wise use of the powers he possessed all who knew him will admit. But, inclusive as the Tennysonian phrase is, it leaves much undescribed when it is applied to the late minister of Highbury. About all really able men there is a power of influencing others, and Mr. Thomas possessed this power in a very remarkable degree. If the special feature in his character had to be described, we should not say that it was his modesty, his kindliness, his accomplishments, or his wisdom, strikingly present as all these were, but the gentle, unfailing influence for good which he exercised. The modern pulpit requires, as the Church did in its early days, men of varied attainments and idiosyncrasies. In it there is room for the severe denunciation of wrongdoing, for the persuasiveness of those who think the silken cord stronger than the iron chain, for ornate phraseology of the poetical mind, and for the sterner language of those who believe that deadened intellect and moral apathy can only be reached by passionate utterance. Mr. Thomas was of the gentle school. He searched men's hearts, no doubt, and sought to awaken the conscience by the most direct appeal; but gentleness ruled all, and it was this that won for him that per-

sonal affection of which he enjoyed so large a share. For many years past the state of his health would not permit him to do all that he desired, but he accomplished a great work, nevertheless ; and although to-day the silent city in which so many of our former fellow-citizens lie will be rendered more sacred by the addition that will be made to it, his influence will remain. Remembering this, let us be thankful. Through all this tract of years he went about among us, not only wearing the white flower of a blameless life, but inciting others to follow his beneficent example. The impersonal thing which we call influence is the legacy he has left, and this is the special and peculiar value of his life.

Various estimates have been made as to the surest way of obtaining that human immortality which many crave, and it has generally been assumed that the writer will live longest. The glorious conceptions of the painter become dim with age; sculpture falls into decay; the highest achievements of the architect are fading from the day of their completion; the ingenuity of the inventor is superseded; the annals in which the deeds of the soldier are chronicled become in the end records of strife and bloodshed. The writer stands before all these, and yet he does not necessarily stand first among those who deserve the highest place. His position depends on the kind of influence which he exerts. The humble philanthropist who has worked for the benefit of mankind in his day and generation is a more valuable influence than a writer who has the wit of a Voltaire. The question of desert involves the further question of the value of the influence exercised. And, measured in this way, there is a sure immortality for the labours of many who leave behind them no work

that has a palpable physical form. Influence may be good and it may be otherwise. Dr. Harris, of New York, has recently traced through six generations the career of the descendants of one woman, and ascertained that she became the mother of a long race of two hundred persons who had given trouble to the State. This picture shows what influence can do. Exercised in an opposite direction, influence acquires a similar reproductiveness, and hence it is very easy to under-estimate the value of personal influence directed towards good objects. Influence of this kind, when strongly marked, incites to charitable deeds and a higher life; it establishes in every person whom it so affects a new centre from which similar influence radiates. The highest achievements of Mr. Thomas lie in this direction, and although his kindly presence is withdrawn from our sight, all that he has done, in making others missionaries to carry on the work which can never be fully accomplished, remains with us. The power exercised by one good man is handed down from generation to generation, and continues a potent force when the source from which it originated is personally forgotten.

It is just this kind of power which Mr. Thomas wielded in an exceptional degree. He knew the secret of reaching the hearts and consciences of those who came within the range of his ministerial work. He encouraged the good, strengthened the weak, and pointed out to all that in their sphere there were duties and responsibilities which could not be safely avoided. The message he left was identical with that which came from the older divines. It is not going to church and chapel, as he said in the last sermon he preached, not by over-scrupulousness about forms, that the greatest

amount of good is done. The highest religious service is to be found in a life of love and purity. Having lived this life himself, his injunction carries with it the weight which is the result of the combination of good words and good example. He showed the world the life he preached. That it will operate as a real power long after the tones of his familiar voice have been forgotten we need not hesitate to believe, and this is the consolation which will be felt by those who to-day follow his revered remains to Arno's Vale. While they will sadly think of their loss—and it is a great loss—they will also think that there never went from amongst us one who, by living the life which he so affectionately commended to others, was more fitted "to enter the bridal palace of the Prince of Peace, and wear the amaranthine crown of victory." To say this is to say that he has left behind him a precious legacy. A life so prepared for a sudden termination could not fail to transmit the influence which it exercised, and in the knowledge of this the sorrow to-day will be modified, for there will remain the consciousness that Mr. Thomas has left an example which will sustain the young, be a solace to the aged, and perpetuate the influence for good which was the glory of his ministry.

As a citizen Mr. Thomas won golden opinions from all classes. When the ministers of all denominations had to be represented in civic and general gatherings, the public instinctively turned to him whenever he was present, and this first position seemed to be loyally conceded to him by his colleagues of the Nonconformist pulpits, and to be his by reason of the innate dignity of his presence, the breadth of his sympathies, and the discretion of his language. It has often been the proud

boast of the Church of England that its organisation was the means of placing a gentleman of education in every parish in the country, and that this agency alone, apart from preaching, established a standard of social elevation and culture which was exceedingly useful. We are not disposed to underrate the utility of this agency. In the days when the country had practically no popular system of education, the presence in every parish of a man of intellectual resources and highly-trained habits of thought must have been very valuable. The development of educational facilities, the growth of Nonconformity, and the expansion of the power of the press have left the parish clergyman as only one among the many influences which now operate on the public mind. Here and there, however, there are individuals in the Church and in the ranks of Nonconformity whose universally acknowledged goodness and usefulness command the admiration and homage of all. Among the men of this class who have within a few years passed from amongst us may be mentioned George Thomas, Canon Moseley, and Robert Charleton. And now to the list has to be added the name of David Thomas. Men like these can be ill spared. We part with them regretfully, and even with personal sorrow, but this regret would be greatly intensified did we not know that they are exemplars who have done much to popularise the principles which guided themselves, and on which we depend for the elevation of the public tastes, and the improvement of the habits which influence our social, moral, and religious life.

From the "CHRISTIAN FAMILY."

MORE than ten years ago we first saw him in the pulpit of Surrey Chapel as the preacher for the London Missionary Society. The impression produced upon that occasion we can never forget, although it was the *presence* of the man rather than the substance of the sermon, admirable as that was, which most affected us. In bodily stature taller than most of his brethren, he struck us as having attained to no ordinary spiritual stature. We were convinced—and subsequent information and experience abundantly affirmed the conviction—that it was no accident of voice, or manner, or appearance which made us feel that we were face to face with a man of pre-eminent piety and religious force. His face was that of one who had known much of sorrow and of pain, yet certainly it was not the face of an ascetic. It was furrowed, and the furrows seemed to have been deepened by many tears. Trouble had left its stamp upon it—the trouble of a heart that had brooded much over the mystery of sin and the tragic aspects of human life; the trouble of one who had often been with the Master in Gethsemane, and who, perhaps, had dwelt too much or too exclusively upon the awful solemnity of earthly responsibilities and the dread possibilities of human existence. But there was a light upon his face which seemed to have come of communion with God, and the eye, filled at once with fire and tenderness, told of a spirit which had not only been awed and moved by the woes and sinfulness of men, but also by the contemplation of the Infinite Light and Infinite Love. His voice appeared, with its trembling eagerness and pathetic agony of entreaty, to search the

hidden depths of the hearers' hearts. Certainly he spoke as one that must give account. His words were fitly in unison with his aspect and manner. Sometimes they cut with the sharpness, swiftness, and accuracy of a skilful surgeon's knife; then they seemed to wail out the sorrow of the speaker's heart over the sinful and the erring with a woman's tenderness and anguish; then they became eager, rapid, subdued tones—almost whisperings—as of one who had caught a new heavenly inspiration, and who was both awed and emboldened by the vision of "Jesus standing at the right hand of God."

To those who did not know Mr. Thomas as a preacher, this will probably seem like exaggeration. Those who knew him best will, we believe, regard it as only a partially successful attempt to describe plain realities. Certainly the impression produced upon the present writer, and to his knowledge upon very many more who made the acquaintance of Mr. Thomas in the same way, was never modified by subsequent experiences of the preacher and the man. The first impression, of which a brief outline has been given, was not only confirmed but deepened in after days.

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